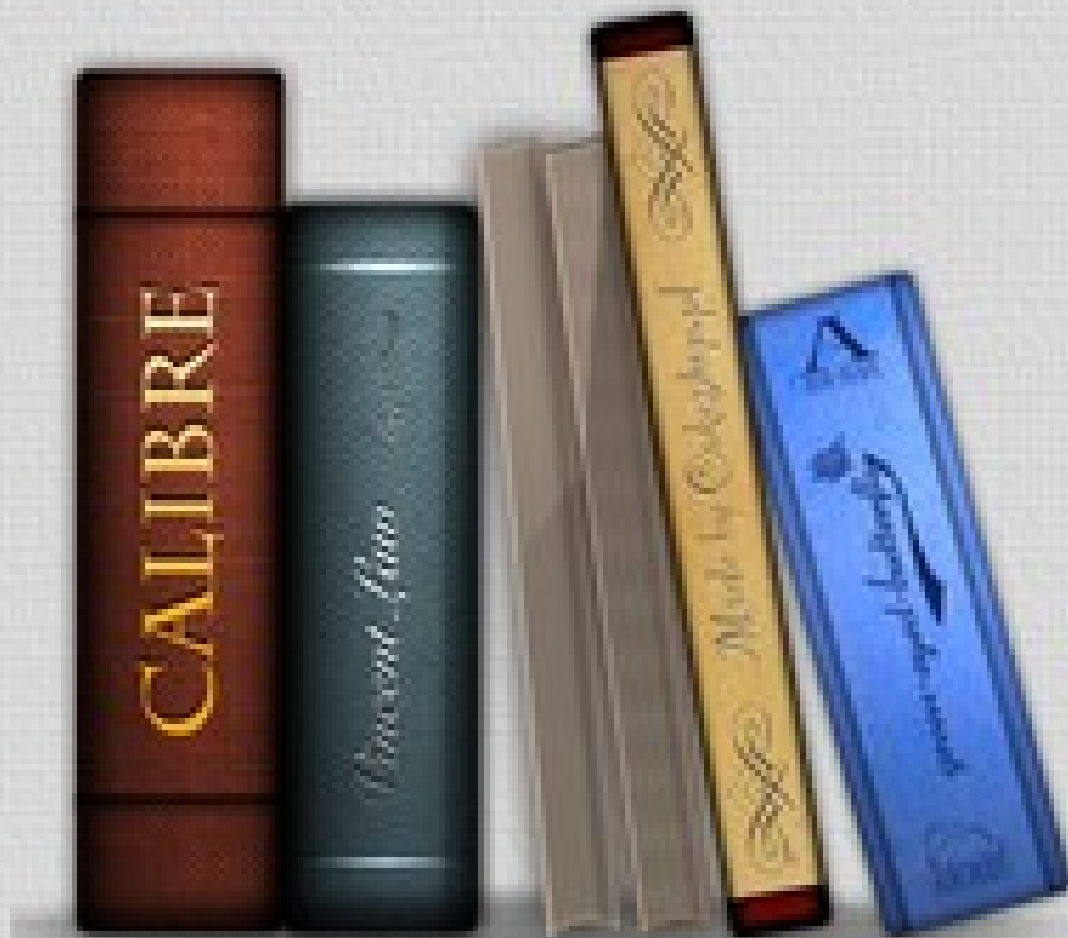


DGuzik 01 Genesis

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Book 1 of Bible Commentary: David Guzik



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1

In the beginning¹ God² created³ the heavens and the earth.⁴

Guzik - Genesis 1:1-31

Genesis 1 - The Account of God's Creation

A. Thoughts to begin with as we study the Bible: how do we approach the Bible?

1. We come to the Bible knowing there is a God.

a. The Bible does not make elaborate arguments for the existence of God. However, it does tell us how we can know God exists.

b. The Bible tells us we can know God exists because of what we see in creation.

i. *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.*

Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

(Psa. 19:1-4)

ii. *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.* (Rom. 1:20)

c. Though many seek to deny the effectiveness of the *teleological* argument for the existence of God (the understanding that there must be a purposeful intelligence Who created this world), it still remains unanswered by the atheist or the agnostic.

2. We come to the Bible believing it is the place where God has spoken to man, perfectly and comprehensively.

a. We believe 2Ti. 3:16-17: *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man*

of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

i. We can study God, but we can't put Him under a microscope. We can only confidently know about Him what He chooses to reveal to us. What He chooses to tell us is profitable and useful for us.

b. We believe the Bible must be understood *literally*, that is, as straightforward and true according to its *literary* context.

i. The Bible is much more than a book; it is a library of books, and books written in different literary forms. Some portions of the Bible give a historical account, others are poetic, and some are prophetic.

ii. We must understand the Bible literally according to its literary context. For example, when David wrote in Psa. 6:6 "*All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears,*" he used a poetic literary form. We understand he didn't *literally* mean he cried so much that he flooded his room and set his bed afloat.

iii. But when the Bible speaks in a historical narrative, we understand it as literal history, not as make-believe fables and myths meant only to tell a spiritual story.

iv. If we *don't* approach the Bible this way, then how will we approach it? Then it is all up to how anyone "feels" about the text.

Though the teachings of Scripture may have infinite applications, they only have one true interpretation.

v. "The only proper way to interpret Genesis 1 is not to 'interpret' it at all. That is, we accept the fact that it was meant to say exactly what it says." (Morris) c. We believe the Bible is not a book of science; yet where it touches science, it speaks the truth. After all, if the Bible is false in regard to science or other things that we *can* prove, then we cannot regard it as reliable in regard to spiritual matters that we *cannot* prove.

3. We come to the Bible knowing the copies we have in our hands are *reliable* duplicates (though not perfect duplicates)

of the exact writings, which God perfectly inspired.

a. We can know this about the Old Testament by seeing the incredible care and reliability of the ancient Jewish scribes, demonstrated by the Dead Sea Scroll discoveries.

b. We can know this about the New Testament by knowing that because of earlier manuscripts, and a greater number of ancient manuscripts, the New Testament is by far the most reliable and exhaustively crosschecked ancient document we possess. Really, no more than one one-thousandth of the New Testament text is in question.

4. We come to the Bible knowing the unique importance of the Book of Genesis.

a. The Bible would be incomplete and perhaps incomprehensible without the Book of Genesis.

It sets the stage for the entire drama of redemption, which unfolds in the rest of the book.

b. Almost all important doctrines and teachings have their foundation in the Book of Genesis: the doctrines of sin, redemption, justification, Jesus Christ, the personality and personhood of God, the kingdom of God, the fall, Israel, the promise of the Messiah, and more.

i. Genesis shows us the origins of the universe, order and complexity, the solar system, the atmosphere and hydrosphere, the origin of life, man, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, nations, religion. It is precisely because people have abandoned the truth of Genesis that society is in such disarray.

c. Genesis is important to the New Testament.

There are at least 165 passages in Genesis either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament; many of these are quoted more than once, so there are at least 200 quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament.

i. Jesus declared the importance of believing what Moses wrote: " *For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?* " (Joh. 5:46-47) We can't say

we believe in Jesus if we don't believe in the Book of Genesis.

d. "I beg and faithfully warn every pious Christian not to stumble at the simplicity of the language and stories that will often meet him there [in Genesis]. He should not doubt that, however simple they may seem, these are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the high majesty, power, and wisdom of God." (Luther, cited in Boice) 5. According to the New Testament, Moses wrote the Book of Genesis (Luk. 24:27, Luk. 24:44). We can surmise that he did this with help from actual written records from the past God had preserved.

There are indicators of where these records begin and end. Note the phrasing of Gen. 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, 37:2.

a. "Thus it is probable that the Book of Genesis was written originally by actual eyewitnesses of the events reported therein. Probably the original narratives were recorded on tables of stone or clay, in common practice of early times, and then handed down from father to son, finally coming into the possession of Moses. Moses perhaps selected the appropriate sections for compilation, inserted his own editorial additions and comments, and provided smooth transitions from one document to the next, with the final result being the Book of Genesis as we have received it." (Morris) B. The first five days of creation.

1. The philosophical importance of knowing God as creator.

a. The philosopher Jean-Paul Sarte stated the essential problem of philosophy: there is something, instead of nothing. *Why?* Everything else in our life flows from the answer to this question.

i. If everything around us, including ourselves, is the result of random, meaningless occurrences apart from the work of a creating God, then it says something about who I am, and where I, and the whole universe, are going. Then the only dignity or honor we bestow upon men is pure sentimentality,

because I don't have any more significance than an amoebae; then there is no greater law in the universe than survival of the fittest.

b. Some 100 years ago, there was a great German philosopher named Arthur Schopenhauer. By habit, he usually dressed like a vagrant, and one day he sat on a park bench in Berlin, deep in thought. His appearance made a policeman suspicious, so the policeman asked the philosopher "Who are you?" Schopenhauer answered, "I would to God I knew."

i. And the only way we can ever really find out who we are is from God. The best place to find out begins in Genesis.

c. There are many possible answers to the question of how everything came into being.

Some say, once there was absolutely nothing, and now there is something. Others (including the Bible) say before there was anything created, there was a Personal Being.

d. One day, students in one of Albert Einstein's classes were saying they had decided there was no God. Einstein asked them how much of all the knowledge in the world they had among themselves collectively, as a class. The students discussed it for a while and decided they had 5% of all human knowledge among themselves.

Einstein thought their estimate was a little generous, but he replied: "Is it possible God exists in the 95% you don't know?"

2. (1) A simple factual statement regarding God work as creator.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

a. **God created:** This summary statement will be detailed in the following verses, but the Bible simply and straightforwardly declares the world did not create itself or come about by chance. It was created by God, who, by definition, is eternal and has always been.

i. "It is no accident that *God* is the subject of the first sentence of the Bible, for this word dominates the whole

chapter and catches the eye at every point of the page: it is used some thirty-five times in as many verses of the story." (Kidner) ii. If you believe Gen. 1:1, you really have no problem believing the rest of the Bible.

b. **God:** This is the ancient Hebrew word *Elohim*. Grammatically it is a plural word used as if it were singular. The verbs and pronouns used with *Elohim* should be in the plural, but when *Elohim* refers to the LORD God the verbs and pronouns are in the singular.

i. Rabbi Simeon ben Joachi, commenting on the word *Elohim*: "Come and see the mystery of the word Elohim; there are *three degrees*, and each degree by itself *alone*, and yet notwithstanding they are all *one*, and *joined together* in *one*, and are not divided from each other." Clarke adds: "He must be strangely prejudiced indeed who cannot see that the doctrine of a Trinity, and of a Trinity in unity, is expressed in the above words."

ii. Leupold quoting Luther on *Elohim*: "But we have clear testimony that Moses aimed to indicate the Trinity or the three persons in the one divine nature."

c. **God created the heavens:** The simple fact of God's creation is even more amazing when we consider the greatness of God's universe.

i. A typical galaxy contains billions of individual stars; our galaxy alone (the Milky Way) contains 200 billion stars. Our galaxy is shaped like a giant spiral, rotating in space, with arms reaching out like a pinwheel, and our sun is one star on one arm of the pinwheel. It would take 250 million years for the pinwheel to make one full rotation. But this is only our galaxy; there are many other galaxies with many other shapes, including spirals, spherical clusters, and flat pancakes.

The average distance between one galaxy and another is about 20 million trillion miles.

Our closest galaxy is the Andromeda Galaxy, about 12 million trillion miles away.

ii. For every patch of sky the size of the moon, if you could look very deep, you would see about a million galaxies .

iii. But God did all this Himself: " *Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together.* " (Isa. 48:13) iv. But God is bigger and greater than all His creation: *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?* (Isa. 40:12) d.

God created the heavens and the earth: If **God** created the heavens and the earth, then we must forever put away the idea that anything *happens* by chance. "Chance" merely describes the statistical probability of something happening. *Chance* itself can "do" nothing.

i. People who are otherwise intelligent often fall into this delusion. Jacques Monod, a biochemist, wrote: "Chance *alone* is at the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere. Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution."

ii. But assigning such power to "chance" is crazy. Chance has no power. For example, when a coin is flipped, the chance it will land "heads" is 50%; however, "chance" does not make it land heads. Whether or not it lands heads or tails is due to the strength with which the coin is flipped, the strength of air currents and air pressure as it flies through the air, where it is caught, and if it is flipped over once it is caught. *Chance* doesn't "do"

anything but describe a probability.

iii. When Carl Sagan petitioned the federal government for a grant to search for intelligent life in outer space, how did he hope to find it? By using a super sensitive instrument to pick up radio signals from distant space. When he received those radio signals, he looked for order and pattern, which would demonstrate the signals were transmitted by intelligent life. In the same way, the order and pattern of the whole universe demonstrates that it was fashioned by intelligent

life, not by "chance." Scientists detect "chance" in the radio signals constantly (in the form of unpatterned static), but it tells them *nothing*.

iv. Therefore, when someone says the universe or anything else came about by chance, they are extremely ignorant, superstitious, or just repeating a line they have heard before and have unthinkingly accepted.

e. **God created:** Inherent in the idea of God is that He is an *intelligent designer*. Only an intelligent designer could create a just-right universe, not "chance." Our universe is a just-right universe.

i. The universe has a just-right gravitational force.

· *If it were larger*, the stars would be too hot and would burn up too quickly and too unevenly to support life · *If it were smaller*, the stars would remain so cool, nuclear fusion would never ignite, and there would be no heat and light

ii. The universe has a just-right speed of light.

· *If it were larger*, stars would send out too much light · *If it were smaller*, stars would not send out enough light iii. The universe has a just-right average distance between the stars.

· *If it were larger*, the heavy element density would be too thin for rocky planets to form, and there would only be gaseous planets

· *If it were smaller*, planetary orbits would become destabilized because of the gravitational pull from other stars iv. The universe has a just-right polarity of the water molecule.

· *If it were greater*, the heat of fusion and vaporization would be too great for life to exist

· *If it were smaller*, the heat of fusion and vaporization would be too small for life's existence, liquid water would become too inferior a solvent for life chemistry to proceed, ice would not float, leading to a runaway freeze-up v. We could conclude that there is *no chance* that such a universe could create itself, apart from an intelligent designer.

f. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth: This tells us that God used no pre-existing material to create the earth. The ancient Hebrew word *bara* (**created**) is specific. It means *to create out of nothing*, showing that that God created the world out of nothing, not out of Himself. God is separate from His creation. Unlike Eastern and pantheistic perceptions of god, the Bible teaches the universe could perish yet He would remain.

i. Men cannot "create" in the sense the term is used in Gen. 1:1. We can only "fashion" or "form" things out of existing material. The closest we come to creating is in reproducing ourselves sexually. This is perhaps one reason why Satan wants to pervert and destroy God's plan and standard for sexuality; it is deeply connected to our being made in the image of God.

ii. Ginzberg has a fascinating legend on how the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet all wanted to begin the Bible, but in the end, the letter " *bet*" was allowed, because he said, "O Lord of the world! May it be Thy will to create Thy world through me, seeing that all the dwellers of the world give praise daily unto Thee through me, as it is said, *B*lessed be the Lord forever. Amen, and Amen." So, the Hebrew Book of Genesis begins, " *B*ereshit God created the heaven and the earth."

3. The Bible's clear teaching of God's creation and the uncertainty of modern science.

a. Some scientists often act certain in their knowledge about the origin of the universe, but their constant "revolutionary discoveries" prove they are really just groping in the dark. Honest scientists, those not puffed up with a proud arrogance, will admit this.

b. Some scientists may be arrogant when it comes to what can be known of the universe, but we do not have to accept such arrogance.

The constantly changing scene of science is illustrated in a sidebar to a science article in the *Los Angeles Times* titled,

"The Big Bang and What Followed It": In the beginning, there was light - but also quarks and electrons. The Big Bang spewed out energy that condensed into radiation and particles. The quarks joined into protons and careened wildly about in a hot, dense, glowing goop as opaque as a star.

Time (300,000 years or so) passed. Space expanded. Matter cooled. The electrons and protons, electrically irresistible to each other, merged into neutral hydrogen, and from this marriage, the first atoms were born. Space between atoms became as transparent as crystal - pretty much the way it looks today.

The rest, as they say, is history. Atoms merged to form dust clouds, which grew into stars and galaxies and clusters. Stars used up their nuclear fuel, collapsed and exploded in recurring cycles, fusing elements in the process.

Occasionally, a stable planet condensed around a second-generation star, where carbon-based life forms grew into, among other things, cosmologists, the better to contemplate it all.

c. In 1913, an astronomer in Arizona discovered stars appeared to be moving away from the earth at tremendous speeds, up to two million miles an hour. In 1919, another American astronomer named Edwin Hubble used this information to develop a theory of an expanding universe, which is the foundation of the "Big Bang" idea. Early on, other scientists discovered background radiation from all parts of the universe, which they suppose is the leftover "noise" from the first great explosion. But scientists are really not much closer at all to knowing anything about this instant beginning to the universe.

d. In fact, the more they find out, the more they discover how much they *don't* know.

Astrophysicists are faced with another challenge: trying to figure out what "dark matter" is. Dark matter is a term scientists use to explain an enormous apparent excess of

gravity in the universe. Dark matter may make up 99.9% of everything in the universe, but no one knows what it is. Though suggestions are offered, they are only suggestions. David O.

Caldwell of the University of California at Santa Barbara says, "When it comes to dark matter, the only thing that we are convinced of at the moment is that it's there." But actually, scientists cannot even agree on that! Michael S.

Turner, an astrophysics professor at the University of Chicago, said: "It's very humbling.

The origin, composition, energy and mass of the most common matter in the entire universe is unknown."

e. This uncertainty is shown in a March 6, 1995, front-page article in the *Los Angeles Times* headlined, "Rethinking Cosmic Questions": Ever since people first stood up amid the tall grasses and looked about the world in wonder, religion, mythology and science all have struggled to explain how the world came to be. But when it comes to creation stories, few can hold a candle to the tale cooked up by modern cosmologists.

Dialing back the cosmic clock about 15

billion years, they depict a time before time, a place before space existed. Out of nothing and nowhere, all the energy and matter in the universe exploded into existence in an event that came to be called . . . the Big Bang.

While masterfully spinning ideas out of faith and equations, cosmologists were pitifully short on data. They could not see or measure the phenomena they were trying to explain.

"Twenty-five years ago, cosmology was very close to religion," said physicist Roberto Peccei of UCLA.

Experimental cosmologist Chris Stubbs of the University of Washington, "You've got these things that are ridiculously far away and ridiculously faint, and . . . you've got to make sense out of it."

"At times, I miss the old days when I could just work in my office and not worry that someone would disprove my theory

in a few weeks" said Rocky Kold of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Illinois.

"Many of us who have worked in this field for decades still worry that the whole house of cards is going to collapse," said Princeton cosmologist David Wilkinson.

Recent observations, for example, suggest that the universe is younger than its oldest stars - an enigma that has astronomers scrambling for explanations.

The biggest mystery, however, strikes even scientists as so astonishing as to be absurd: 99% of the universe, according to some estimates, is made of totally unfamiliar stuff.

Commonly known as dark matter, it is actually mostly transparent; it neither shines nor casts a shadow. Whatever it is, it is not like us . . . According to some theories, it also is the glue that holds the universe together, and keeps it from expanding forever into endless space.

f. "The study of human origins seems to be a field in which each discovery raises the debate to a more sophisticated level of uncertainty." (Christopher Stringer of the Natural Museum of London) 4. One may doubt the ability of many modern scientists to answer the question of origins. But that does not automatically give us confidence to the answer in found in the Book of Genesis. Some believe that Genesis only records a "creation myth,"

meant only to show the greatness of God in poetic grandeur. Though there are poetic elements to the account, we believe it was still written to record a historical reality. Other Scriptures, in their approach to Genesis 1, demonstrate this.

a. Psalm 136 connects the Genesis account of creation with the rest of Israel's history in a seamless fabric. The creation account is not put in a category of "historical fiction."

b. Jesus quoted Genesis as if it were a purely historical record (Mat. 19:4-6 and 23:35).

c. C.S. Lewis wrote that when he heard a Biblical scholar say the Genesis creation account was a myth, he didn't want to know about the man's credentials as a Biblical scholar. He

wanted to know how many myths the man had read. Myths were Lewis' business as a literary scholar, and he could see the Biblical account of creation was unlike mythical accounts.

d. It is true that Genesis was not written primarily as a scientific document. But if God gave us a truly scientific, detailed account of creation, written in scientific language, there would be no one who could understand it and no end to the length of such an account. Even if it were written in simple, 20th-century scientific language, it would have made no sense to all previous generations and no sense to future generations either.

e. *It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the glory of kings is to search out a matter* (Pro.

25:2). Scientific inquiry is the glory of man; yet it must all be done with utmost humility, realizing God *conceals* these matters for man to search out.

5. God did all this **in the beginning**, yet there was much before the **beginning**.

a. God Himself was before the beginning: *Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting* (Psa. 93:2). Some are troubled by the questions, "Where did God come from?" and "Who created God?" The answer is found in the definition of God - that God is the uncreated Being, eternal, and without beginning or end.

i. This is demonstrated in several passages of Scripture. *LORD, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

(Psa. 90:1-2)

ii. J. Edwin Orr used a memorable definition of God, which was thoroughly Biblical: *God is the only infinite, eternal, and unchangable spirit, the perfect being in whom all things begin, and continue, and end.*

b. God was in three Persons before the beginning, and the Persons shared a relationship of love and fellowship: "*Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was . . .*

for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." (Joh. 17:5, 17:24) c. Before the beginning, there was an *eternal purpose* in the heart of God (Eph. 3:11) to *gather together in one all things in Christ* (Eph.

1:10). God's purpose was to "resolve" or "sum up" all things in Jesus, as if Jesus Himself were the answer to a great and complex problem God wrote out on the "blackboard" of the universe.

d. Before the beginning, God had a specific plan to fulfill this eternal purpose, with many different aspects revealed to us:

i. The mission of Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world: *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.* (1Pe. 1:20) ii. Eternal life was promised before time began: *in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.*

(Tit. 1:2)

iii. The mystery of the gospel (the cross) was foreordained before the ages: *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory.* (1Co. 2:7) iv. The grace given unto us was given before the world began: *who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* (2Ti. 1:9) v. Believers in Jesus Christ were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world: *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.* (Eph. 1:4) e. At some time before the beginning, God created the angels, because they witnessed the creation of the heavens and the earth (Job.

38:7).

6. (2) The state of the earth before God organized creation. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

a. **The earth was without form, and void:** Some translate the idea in this verse as **the earth *became* without form and void**. Their thinking is the earth was originally created *not without form and void*, but it *became without form and void* through the destructive work of Satan. However, this is not the plain grammatical sense of the ancient Hebrew.

i. Those who follow this idea look to Isa.

45:18: *For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."* The idea is God here says He did *not* create the world *in vain* (the Hebrew word is the same as the word for *void* in Gen. 1:1).

ii. Based on these ideas, some have advanced what has been called the "Gap Theory." It is the idea that there was a long and indefinite chronological gap between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2. Most "Gap Theory"

adherents use the theory to explain the fossil record, assigning old and extinct fossils to this indefinite gap.

iii. Whatever merit the gap theory may have, it cannot explain the extinction and fossilization of ancient animals.

The Bible says plainly death came by Adam (Rom.

5:12), and since fossils are the result of death, they could not have happened before Adam's time.

b. **Darkness was on the face of the deep:** This may describe a sense of resistance to the moving of the Holy Spirit on the earth. Some speculate this was because Satan was cast down to the earth (Isa. 14:12; Eze. 28:16) and resisted God's plan, though his resistance was futile.

i. Leupold on **the Spirit of God was hovering**: "The verb . . . signifies a vibrant moving, a protective hovering . . . His was the preparatory work for leading over from the inorganic to the organic."

ii. "Any impression of Olympian detachment which the rest of the chapter might have conveyed is forestalled by the simile of the mother-bird 'hovering' (Moffatt) or fluttering by her brood. The verb reappears in Deu.

32:11 to describe the eagle's movements in stirring its young into flight." (Kidner) c. When God created the earth, He quite likely built an "old" earth, creating things in the midst of a time sequence, with age "built in."

i. For example, Adam was already of mature age when he was created; there was age "built in." Likewise, the trees in the Garden of Eden had rings in them, and there were undoubtedly canyons and sand beaches in Adam's world.

7. (3-5) The first day of creation: light is created and divided from the darkness.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

a. **Let there be light**: The first step from chaos to order is to bring light. This is also the way God works in our life.

i. Paul speaks about the light brought to us by the gospel: *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2Co. 4:3-6) b.

Then God said: God did not have to fashion light with His

hands. It was enough for God to merely speak the words, "*Light be!*" and there was light.

i. Because God created things by speaking them into existence, some have said we can operate on the same principle, speaking things into existence by faith.

ii. This is based on a wrong understanding of Heb. 11:3 (*by faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God*), which is taken to say God Himself *used* faith in creating the world. Instead, it says it is by faith *we understand* God created the world.

iii. Also, some have a wrong understanding of Mar. 11:22 which is taken to literally mean "have God's faith" as if we are to have the same faith God has. But the words *Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God"* cannot mean this, because faith, as Heb. 11:1 tells us, *is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*.

What does God "hope" for? What does He not see? An omnipotent, omniscient Being certainly does not need faith. He is the *object* of faith.

c. **There was light:** Genesis tells us that light, day, and night each existed before the sun and the moon were created on the fourth day (Gen.

1:14-19). This shows us that light is more than a physical substance; it also has a supernatural aspect. In the new heavens and the new earth, there won't be any sun or moon. God Himself will be the light (Rev. 22:5).

ii. The darkness God sent upon the Egyptians (Exo. 10:21) had a tangible quality to it, far beyond what we usually think of as being associated with darkness; it could be *felt*. This demonstrates a certain supernatural element, which can be related to light and darkness.

d. **So the evening and the morning were the first day:** Many wonder if this was a literal day (in the sense we think of a day) or if it was a geological age. Some say that God created the world in six days, and others say He created it in

six vast geological ages. Though there is disagreement among Christians on this, the most plain and simple meaning of the text is that He created in six days *as we think of days*.

i. "If the *days* were not days at all, would God have countenanced the word? Does He trade in inaccuracies, however edifying? The question hinges on the proper use of language." (Kidner)

ii. "There ought to be no need of refuting the idea that *yom* means period. Reputable dictionaries . . . know nothing of this notion.

Hebrew dictionaries are our primary source of reliable information concerning Hebrew words." (Leupold)

8. (6-8) The second day of creation: God makes an atmospheric division.

Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

a. **Let there be a firmament:** The idea of a **firmament** is of an *expanse* (NIV, NAS) or *space* (NLT). The waters of the land are separated from the water vapor in the sky.

b. **The waters which were above the firmament:** Here, the Bible recognizes the existence of water vapor in the sky. "The *waters above the firmament* thus probably constituted a vast blanket of water vapor above the troposphere and possibly above the stratosphere as well, in the high temperature region now known as the ionosphere, and extending far into space." (Morris) Such a vapor blanket would greatly change the ecology of the earth, and Henry Morris suggests several effects of a vapor blanket.

i. It would serve as a global greenhouse, maintaining an essentially uniformly pleasant temperature all over the

world.

ii. Without great temperature variations, there would be no significant winds, and the water-rain cycle could not form. There would be no rain as we know it today.

iii. There would be lush, tropical-like vegetation, all over the world, fed not by rain, but by a rich evaporation and condensation cycle, resulting in heavy dew or ground-fog.

iv. The vapor blanket would filter out ultraviolet radiation, cosmic rays, and other destructive energies bombarding the planet.

These are known to be the cause of mutations, which decrease human longevity.

Human and animal life spans would be greatly increased.

v. A vapor blanket would provide the necessary reservoir for a potential worldwide flood.

9. (9-13) The third day of creation: the land is divided from the sea; plants and all types of vegetation are created.

Then God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so. And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good. Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.

a. **Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together:** The idea is that before this, the earth was covered with water. Now the waters are **gathered together into one place**, and dry land appears.

b. **Let the earth bring forth grass:** All this happened before the creation of the Sun (the fourth day of creation, Gen. 1:14-19). This means the plants must have had

sufficient nourishment because of the light God had created before the sun and the moon.

i. Those who propose these days of creation were not literal days, but successive "ages"

of slow, evolutionary development have a real problem here. It is hard to explain how plants and all vegetation could grow and thrive eons before the sun and the moon. No modern evolutionist would argue plant life is older than the sun or the moon, but this is what the Genesis record tells us.

ii. Many wonder how the sun, moon, and stars were created on the fourth day when light (including day and night) was created on the first day. Many have suggested the problem is solved by saying these heavenly bodies were created on the first day, but were not specifically visible, or not finally formed, until the fourth. But Revelation tells us of a coming day when we won't need the sun, moon, and stars any longer (Rev.

21:23). There's no reason why God couldn't have started creation in the same way He will end it.

b. **And it was so:** This is the beginning of life on planet earth, directly created by God, not slowly evolving over millions of years.

i. Some scientists now say life on earth began when immense meteorites carrying amino acids impacted earth at a time when the sun was cooler and the earth was a watery ball covered with ice up to 1,000 feet thick. The idea is that a meteor hits the ice, breaks through, and "seeds" the water underneath with the building blocks of life, which assemble into an "organic soup."

However the process was triggered, the scientists said life on earth began in "a geological instant." But by an instant, they mean 10 million years or less. It takes more faith to believe this than to believe in Genesis.

ii. The fossil evidence also demonstrates life exploded into existence on earth, instead of slowly evolving.

c. **The earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed . . . and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself:**

The plants were created not as seeds, but as full-grown plants each bearing seeds. They were thus created as mature plants, having the "appearance" of age. The chicken really did come before the egg.

d. **According to its kind:** This phrase appears ten times in Genesis chapter 1. It means God allows variation within a **kind**, but something of one **kind** will never develop into something of another **kind**.

e. **And God saw that it was good:** God knows what is **good**. He is not some vague moral neutral. He knows what is **good** and organizes His creation to result in something **good**.

i. God does not call the earth **good** until it has become habitable, a place where man can live.

f. **Let the earth bring forth . . . every herb that yields seed . . . the herb that yields seed according to its kind . . . And God saw that it was good:** Some use this passage to justify the use of drugs (especially marijuana) because **grass** and **every herb** came forth at God's command. But certainly, not every herb is good for every purpose. Hemlock is natural, but not good.

i. In fact, the use of drugs in this manner is nowhere approved and is always condemned in the Bible. The wrong use of drugs is often associated with sorcery and the occult.

ii. Sorcery is universally condemned in the Bible (Exo. 22:18, Deu. 18:10, 2Ch. 33:6, Rev. 21:8 and 22:15). In both the Old and New Testaments, the word *sorcery* was connected with the making and taking of drugs.

10. (14-19) The fourth day of creation: the sun, moon, and stars.

Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on

the earth"; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. *He made* the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

a. **Let them be for signs and seasons:** God made the sun and the moon - these **lights in the firmament of the heavens** to be for **signs and seasons**. Since the beginning, man has used God's provision of the sun, moon, and stars to mark and measure time and direction.

b. **God set them in the firmament of the heavens:** God knew exactly how far to set the sun from the earth. A few million miles more or less and life as we know it would be impossible.

i. The intricate balance of our ecosystem argues strongly for the existence of a Creator. We live in a very complex world.

ii. Ginzberg quotes a Jewish legend connecting the movement of the sun to the praise of God (as in Psa. 113:3, 50:1, and 148:3): "The progress of the sun in his circuit is an uninterrupted song of praise to God. And this song alone makes his motion possible. Therefore, when Joshua wanted to bid the sun stand still, he had to command him to be silent. His song of praise hushed, the sun stood still."

c. **Let them be for signs and seasons:** When God set the **lights in the heavens** to be **for signs**, it probably includes what we commonly call the zodiac, but was called by the ancient Hebrews the *Mazzaroth* (Job. 38:31-32).

i. Significantly, the sequence of the zodiac is the same in every language and culture, even if the specific names of the constellations change. Also, we know the figures of the constellations suggested to us don't look like those things at all, and, they never did. Yet the names for the figures of the constellations are the same in all cultures. This points to a

common, pre-Babel beginning for all these things, before the truth of the constellations was corrupted.

ii. Luk. 1:70 and Act. 3:21 speak of *holy prophets since the world began*. These *prophets* may be the stars themselves. Psa.

147:4 and Isa. 40:26 tell us God has the stars all numbered and God has a *name* for them all. Psa. 19:1-6 tells us the heavens contain a message from God.

iii. Astrology is a satanic corruption of God's original "message in the stars," a message outlining His plan of redemption. Because astrology is a corruption, it is to be avoided always by man (Isa. 47:12-15).

d. **He made the stars also:** With all the other stars in our universe, we often wonder if there is life on other planets.

i. When you take into account all that is necessary for the sustenance of life as we know it, there are few planets able to support life. Taking into account factors such as our galaxy type, star location, star age, star mass, star color, distance from star, axis tilt, rotation period, surface gravity, tidal force, magnetic field, oxygen quantity in atmosphere, atmospheric pressure, and 20

other important factors, the probability of all 33 occurrences happening on any one planet is one in 10 to the 42 power. The total number of possible planets in the universe is 10 to the 22 power.

ii. The U.S. government spends \$100 million a year looking for extraterrestrial intelligence. It might be wiser to spend the money cultivating intelligent life in Washington.

11. (20-23) The fifth day of creation: birds and sea creatures are created.

Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind.

And God saw that *it was* good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

a. **Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures:** We see the great variety of birds and sea creatures were created at the same time, not evolving slowly over millions of years. Even though plant life was created before animal life, animal life was not created out of plant life.

i. Among the diversity of animals, many share similar structures: birds, reptiles, mammals, and so forth. This argues at least as persuasively for a common Designer as it does for a common life source. All life did not come from the same primordial cell, but it did all come from the same Designer.

b. **According to their kind:** Again, all animal life is created **according to its kind**. God deliberately structured plenty of variation within a kind, but one "kind" does not become another.

i. For example, structure among dogs is diverse. The teacup poodle is very different from the Great Dane, but they are both dogs. However, they won't become mice, no matter how much breeding is done.

ii. Evolutionists often give convincing examples of *microevolution*, the variation of a kind within its kind, adapting to the environment. For example, the ratio of black to white peppered moths may increase when pollution makes it easier for dark moths to escape detection; or finches may develop different beaks in response to their distinctive environment. But the moths are still moths, and the finches are still finches.

There has been no change outside of the kind. *Micro* evolution *does not* prove *macro* evolution.

12. Doesn't the fossil record show these creatures slowly evolved into existence, instead of suddenly appearing?

a. Most people are unaware that Darwin's strongest opponents were not clergymen, but fossil experts. Darwin admitted the state of the fossil evidence was "the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory," and because of the fossil evidence, "all the most eminent paleontologists . . . and all our greatest geologists . . . have unanimously, often vehemently, maintained" that the species do not change.

b. The fossil record is marked by two great principles: first, *stasis*, which means most species are unchanged in all their documented history. The way they look when they first appear in the fossil record is the way they look when last appearing in the fossil record. They have not changed. Second, *sudden appearance*, which means in any local area, a species does not arise gradually, but appears all at once and "fully formed."

i. Philip Johnson: "If evolution means the gradual change of one kind of organism into another kind, the outstanding characteristic of the fossil record is the absence of evidence for evolution."

c. The Bighorn Basin in Wyoming contains a continuous record of fossil deposits for what geologists say is five million years. Because this record is so complete, paleontologists assumed a positive trail of evolution could be found.

Instead, "the fossil record does not convincingly document a single transition from one species to another." (Johnson) i.

Evolutionist Nile Eldredge writes: "We paleontologists have said that the history of life [in the fossil record] supports [the story of gradual evolution], all the while knowing that it does not." (Johnson) d. Either evolution happened slowly, with each tiny change building on the last, over billions of years; or the changes came as quick leaps: something like a mouse coming out of a snake's egg.

i. The fossil record totally rejects the idea of millions of tiny changes; the quick leaps are a way of attributing miraculous power to "chance" or "nature" instead of God. While

admiring the faith of those who believe in such hopeful monsters, it seems far more rational to believe in a wise, creating, designing God.

C. The sixth day of creation: the creation of man.

1. (24-25) God makes land animals.

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

a. **Let the earth bring forth the living creature:** On the fifth day of creation, God made birds and sea animals, but now God turns His creative attention towards land animals of various types.

b. **God made the beast of the earth according to its kind:** When we look at the infinite variety of the animal kingdom (both living and extinct), we must be impressed with God's creative power, as well as His sense of humor. Any Being who makes the giraffe, the platypus, and the peacock is a God of joy and humor.

i. To a peahen, the most attractive peacocks are the ones with the biggest fans, but the big fan on the tail makes it difficult to escape a predator. Therefore, the peahen rewards the peacock with the least chance of survival. This is a great problem for the idea of "survival of the fittest."

c. **According to its kind:** Again, this important phrase is emphasized. God allows tremendous variation within a kind, but one "kind" will never become another "kind."

2. (26) God plans to make man in His image.

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

a. **Let Us make man in Our image:** The use of the plural (**Let Us . . . in Our image, according to Our likeness**) is consistent with the idea that there is One God in three Persons, what we know as the Trinity.

i. Leupold does a good job showing that the plurality of **let Us make** cannot be merely the plurality of royalty, nor can it be God speaking with and to the angels. It is an indicator of the Trinity, though not clearly spelled out.

b. **In Our image:** An understanding of who man is begins with knowing we are made in the image of God. Man is different from every other order of created being because He has a created consistency with God.

i. This means there is an unbridgeable gap between human life and animal life. Though we are biologically similar to certain animals, we are distinct in our moral, intellectual, and spiritual capabilities.

ii. This means there is also an unbridgeable gap between human life and angelic life.

Nowhere are we told the angels are made in the **image** of God. Angels cannot have the same kind of relationship of love and fellowship with God we can have.

iii. This means the incarnation was truly possible. God (in the Second Person of the Trinity) could really become man, because although deity and humanity are not the same, they are compatible.

iv. This means human life has intrinsic value, quite apart from the "quality of life"

experienced by any individual, because human life is made in the **image** of God.

c. **In Our image:** There are several specific things in man that show him to be made in the **image** of God.

- Man alone has a natural countenance looking upward
- Man alone has such a variety of facial expressions
- Man alone has a sense of shame expressing itself in a blush
- Man alone speaks

- Man alone possesses *personality, morality, and spirituality*

d. **In Our image:** There are at least three aspects to the idea that we are made in the **image** of God.

- It means humans possess *personality*: knowledge, feelings, and a will. This sets man apart from all animals and plants
- It means humans possess *morality*: we are able to make moral judgments and have a conscience

- It means humans possess *spirituality*: man is made for communion with God. It is on the level of spirit we communicate with God

e. **In Our image:** This does not mean that God has a physical or human body. God is a Spirit (Joh. 4:24). Though God does not have a physical body, He designed man so man's physical body could do many of the things God does: see, hear, smell, touch, speak, think, plan, and so forth.

i. "It will hardly be safe to say that the body of man is patterned after God, because God, being an incorporeal spirit, cannot have what we term a material body. Yet the body of man must at least be regarded as the fittest receptacle for the man's spirit and so must bear at least an analogy that is so close that God and His angels choose to appear in human form when they appear to men." (Leupold)

f. **In Our image, according to Our likeness:** The terms for **image** and **likeness** are slightly different. **Image** has more to do with appearance, and **likeness** has more to do with an abstract similarity, but they both essentially mean the same thing here in this context.

g. **Let them have dominion:** Before God ever created man He decreed man would **have dominion over** the earth. Man's pre-eminence of the created order and his ability to affect his environment is no accident; it is part of God's plan for man and the earth.

i. In this sense, it is sin if man does not use this dominion responsibly, in the sense of a proper regard for stewardship on this earth.

3. (27-31) God's creation of man and initial commission to Adam.

So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for food"; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

a. **So God created man in His own image:** God created man according to His plan as described in Gen. 1:26. The concept of man being created **in the image of God** is repeated to give emphasis to the idea.

i. We are plainly told God created man fully formed, and created him in one day, not gradually over millions of years of progressive evolution. The idea that a slow, progressive evolution could produce a complex mechanism like the human body just doesn't hold up.

ii. It is said there would be at least 40

different stages of evolution required to form an eye. What possible benefit could there be for the first 39 stages? The mathematician D.S. Ulam argues it was highly improbable for the eye to evolve by the accumulation of small mutations, because the number of mutations must be so large and the time available was not nearly long enough for them to appear. Evolutionist Ernst Mayr commented: "Somehow or other by adjusting these figures we will come out all right. We are comforted by the fact that evolution has

occurred." Johnson observes: "Darwinism to them was not a theory open to refutation but a fact to be accounted for."

(Johnson)

iii. Darwin wrote: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." Professor Richard Goldschmidt, a geneticist at the University of California at Berkley, listed a series of complex structures (from the hair of mammals to hemoglobin) he thought could not have been produced by thousands of years of small mutations. "The Darwinists met this fantastic suggestion with savage ridicule. As Goldschmidt put it, 'This time I was not only crazy but almost a criminal.' . . . To suppose that such a random event could reconstruct even a single complex organ like a liver or kidney is about as reasonable as to suppose that an improved watch can be designed by throwing an old one against the wall." (Johnson)

b. **Male and female He created them:** This should not be construed to mean Adam was originally some type of androgynous being, being both male and female. This passage of Genesis gives us an overview of God's creation of man, and Genesis 2 will explain how exactly God created male and female.

i. In our day, many say there is no real difference between men and women. This makes sense if we are the result of mindless evolution, but not it is true that **male and female He created them**. To God, the differences between men and women are not accidents. Since He created them, the differences are good and meaningful.

ii. Men are not women, and women are not men. One of the saddest signs of our culture's depravity is the amount and the degree of gender confusion today.

iii. It is vain to wonder if men or women are superior to the other. A man is absolutely superior at being a man. A woman is absolutely superior at being a woman. But when a man

tries to be a woman or a woman tries to be a man, you have something inferior.

c. **Then God blessed them:** the first thing God did for man was to bless him. Without the goodness of God's blessing, human life would be not only unbearable, but also impossible.

d. **Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion:** God also gives man a job to do: fulfill God's intention of man's exercise of dominion over the earth.

Inherent in this command is that man should **be fruitful and multiply** and **fill the earth**. Man cannot fulfill God's plan for him on the earth unless he populates it.

i. Additionally, God gave mankind a desire for sex, which would make the populating of the earth quick and likely.

ii. However, many have thought that being fruitful and multiplying was God's only or main purpose for sex, but this isn't the case.

The primary reason God created sex was to contribute to the bonding of a one-flesh relationship.

iii. Animals have sexual relations only for reproduction, but human sexual response is different from animal sexual response in many ways. Human ovulation has no outward sign; humans have sex in private; humans have secondary sexual characteristics (only in humans do females develop breasts *before* the first birth). Only humans demonstrate a constant availability for and interest in sex, as opposed to a "heat" season in animals. In humans, the duration of the sexual interlude is longer and the intensity of the pleasure of sex is stronger, and only humans continue to have intercourse after the end of fertility. None of these specifically human dimensions of sex are required for reproduction, but all of them are useful for sex as a tool of bonding.

e. **To you it shall be for food:** God gave man dominion over the whole earth, but only vegetation is specifically

mentioned as being **for food**. Seemingly, before the flood, the human race was vegetarian, but after the flood, man was given permission to eat the flesh of animals (Gen. 9:3).

f. **God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good:** God's final analysis of His work of creation is that it was **very good**. God was pleased with His creation, and so are we!

i. When God pronounced the creation **good**, He really meant it. At the time, it was entirely **good**; there was no death or decay on earth at all.

4. The fossil discoveries of our "human ancestors"

such as *Australopithecus afarensis*, *Australopithecus africanus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo Erectus* show that the search for our "human ancestors" has been one filled with dishonest science and wishful thinking.

a. Quoting Johnson: "The psychological atmosphere that surrounds the viewing of hominid fossils is uncannily reminiscent of the veneration of relics at a medieval shrine." In 1984, the American Museum of Natural History held an unprecedented showing of original fossils said to depict human evolution titled *Ancestors*.

b. From Johnson: "The 'priceless and fragile relics' were carried by anxious curators in first-class airplane seats and brought to the Museum in a VIP motorcade of limousines with police escort. Inside the Museum, the relics were placed behind bullet-proof glass to be admired by a select preview audience of anthropologists, who spoke in hushed voices because 'It was like discussing theology in a cathedral.' A sociologist observing this ritual of the anthropologist tribe remarked, 'Sounds like ancestor worship to me.'

"

c. Solly Zuckerman is a committed evolutionist and one of Britain's most influential scientists.

He also regards much of the fossil evidence for human evolution as nonsense. Zuckerman has subjected key fossils to years of biometric testing and declares that the idea that

they walked and ran upright is flimsy wishful thinking. He remarked that the record of reckless speculation in the field of human origins "is so astonishing that it is legitimate to ask whether much science is yet to be found in this field at all." (Johnson) d. "The story of human descent from apes is not merely a scientific hypothesis; it is the secular equivalent of the story of Adam and Eve, and a matter of immense cultural importance.

Propagating the story requires illustrations, museum exhibits, and television reenactments.

It also requires a priesthood, in the form of thousands of researchers, teachers, and artists who provide realistic and imaginative detail and carry the story out to the general public

The scientific priesthood that has authority to interpret the official creation story gains immense cultural influence thereby, which it might lose if the story were called into question.

The experts therefore have a vested interest in protecting the story, and in imposing rules of reasoning that make it invulnerable. When critics ask, 'Is your theory really true?' we should not be satisfied to be answered that 'it is good science, as we define science'." (Johnson) e. Evolutionists are not interested in testing if their theory is true. They simply believe once you ignore the creating hand of God, it is the only explanation available, so their job is to figure out *how* it works, not *if* it is true.

5. Why is evolution so universally believed today?

a. In the 1920's, a former substitute teacher in a Tennessee school volunteered to be the defendant in a case meant to challenge a state law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in the public schools. The teacher wasn't even sure he had taught evolution, but the trial went ahead.

b. Prosecuting the case was William Jennings Bryan, former Secretary of State under Woodrow Wilson, and a three-time Democratic candidate for President. Bryan believed in the

Bible, but not literally. He thought the "days" of Genesis referred not to 24-hour days, but to historical ages of indefinite duration. Leading the defense was Clarence Darrow, a famous criminal lawyer and agnostic lecturer. Darrow maneuvered Bryan to take the stand as an expert witness on the Bible, and he humiliated Bryan in a devastating cross-examination. Once that purpose was accomplished, Darrow pleaded guilty on behalf of his client and paid a \$100 fine.

c. The trial was therefore inconclusive, but the "Scopes Monkey Trial" was presented to the world by sarcastic journalist H.L. Mencken, Broadway, and Hollywood, and was a huge public relations triumph for Darwinism. People who believed in God's creation came to be thought of as fools and hicks, and evolution was given the veneer of respectability. Combine this with a strong anti-supernaturalism on the part of many scientists and educators, and today's acceptance of evolution is understandable.

d. The same attitude is used to squelch debate and questions about evolution today. "When outsiders question whether the theory of evolution is as secure as we have been led to believe, we are firmly told that such questions are out of order. The arguments among the experts are said to be about matters of detail, such as the precise time scale and the mechanism of evolutionary transformations.

These disagreements are signs not of crisis but of healthy creative ferment within the field, and in any case there is no room for doubt whatever about something called the 'fact' of evolution." (Johnson) **2** Now¹ the earth² was without shape and empty,³ and darkness⁴ was over the surface of the watery deep,⁵ but the Spirit of God⁶ was moving⁷ over the surface⁸ of the water.⁹ **3** God said,¹ "Let there be² light."³ And there was light! **4** God saw¹ that the light was good,² so God separated³ the light from the darkness. **5** God

called¹ the light “day” and the darkness² “night.” There was evening, and there was morning, marking the first day.³

6 God said, “Let there be an expanse¹ in the midst of the waters and let it separate water² from water. **7** So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it.¹ It was so.² **8** God called the expanse “sky.”¹ There was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

9 God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place¹ and let dry ground appear.”² It was so. **10** God called the dry ground “land”¹ and the gathered waters he called “seas.” God saw that it was good.

11 God said, “Let the land produce vegetation:¹ plants yielding seeds according to their kinds,² and³ trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” It was so. **12**

The land produced vegetation – plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. **13**

There was evening, and there was morning, a third day.

14 God said, “Let there be lights¹ in the expanse² of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs³ to indicate seasons and days and years, **15** and let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” It was so. **16** God made two great lights¹ – the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night. He made the stars also.² **17** God placed the lights¹ in the expanse of the sky to shine on the earth, **18** to preside over the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.¹ God saw that it was good. **19** There was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.

20 God said, “Let the water swarm with swarms¹ of living creatures and let birds fly² above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” **21** God created the great sea creatures¹ and every living and moving thing with which the water swarmed, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. God saw that it was good.

22 God blessed them¹ and said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”² **23** There was evening, and there was morning, a fifth day.

24 God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals, each according to its kind.”¹ It was so. **25** God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the cattle according to their kinds, and all the creatures that creep along the ground according to their kinds. God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, “Let us make¹ humankind² in our image, after our likeness,³ so they may rule⁴ over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth,⁵ and over all the creatures that move⁶ on the earth.”

27 God created humankind¹ in his own image, in the image of God he created them,² male and female he created them.³

28 God blessed¹ them and said² to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it!³ Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”⁴ **29** Then God said, “I now¹ give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the entire earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.² **30** And to all the animals of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give¹ every green plant for food.” It was so.

31 God saw all that he had made – and it was very good!¹ There was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

1 The heavens and the earth¹ were completed with everything that was in them.²

Guzik - Genesis 2:1-25

Genesis 2 - Creation Completed; Adam in the

Garden of Eden

A. The completion of creation.

1. (1-3) The seventh day of creation.

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

a. **And He rested on the seventh day:** God did not need rest on the seventh day because He was tired. He **rested** to show His creating work was done, to give a pattern to man regarding the structure of time (in seven-day weeks), and to give an example of the blessing of rest to man on the seventh day.

i. The seven-day week is permanently ingrained in man. Though some through history tried to change the seven-day week (a ten-day week was attempted during the French Revolution), those attempts have come to nothing. We are on a seven-day cycle because *God* is on a seven-day cycle.

b. **God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it:** God **sanctified** the seventh day because it was a gift to man for rest and replenishment, and most of all because the Sabbath is a shadow of the rest available through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

i. Col. 2:16-17 and Gal. 4:9-11 make it clear that Christians are not under obligation to observe the Sabbath today, because Jesus fulfilled the purpose and plan of the Sabbath for us and in us (Heb. 4:9-11). Yet Christians do not lose the Sabbath; *every day* is a day of rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Every day is specially set apart to God.

ii. Though we are free from the legal obligation of the Sabbath, we dare not ignore the importance of a day of rest. God has built us so we *need* one. But we are also commanded to work six days. "He who idles his time away in the *six* days is equally culpable in the sight of God as he who works on the *seventh*." (Clarke) In our modern world of four or five day workweeks and generous vacation time, surely more "leisure time" can be given to the work of the LORD.

c. **In it He rested from all His work:** Though God rested on the seventh day of creation, He did not institute the Sabbath or show us His rest for His own sake. God does not take the Sabbath off. Jesus Himself said, "*My Father has been working until now, and I have been working*" (Joh. 5:17) . God does not need a day off, but man needs to see the rest of God and know he can enter into it by the finished work of Jesus.

i. The description of each other day of creation ended with the phrase, "*so the evening and the morning were the . . . day.* "

However, this seventh day of creation does not have that phrase. This is because God's rest for us isn't confined to one literal day.

In Jesus, God has an *eternal* Sabbath rest for His people (Heb. 4:9-11).

ii. "God, having completed His work of creation, rests, as if to say, 'This is the destiny of those who are My people; to rest as I rest, to rest in Me.' " (Boice) 2. (4-7) The history of the heavens and the earth.

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the

LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

a. **This is the history of the heavens and the earth:**

This probably ends the "genealogy"

of **the heavens and the earth**, a history given directly by God to either Moses or Adam, recording the history of God's seven-day creation. This was something no human was present to witness.

b. **In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens:** This is the first use of **LORD** (Yahweh) in the Bible. Our English word *Lord* comes from the Anglo-Saxon word for *bread* (as does our word *loaf*), because ancient English men of high stature would keep a continual open house, where all could come and get bread to eat. They gained the honorable title of *lords*, meaning "dispensers of bread."

c. **Before any plant of the field was in the earth:** This history begins before there was any vegetation on the earth at all (back to Gen.

1:1), a time when there was only space and a watery globe we know as the earth.

d. **The LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth:** When God first created vegetation (on the third day of creation, Gen.

1:11-13), man was not yet been created to care for the vegetation of the earth, and there was no rain. The thick blanket of water vapor in the outer atmosphere created on the second day of creation (Gen. 1:6-8) made for no rain cycle (as we know it) but for a rich system of evaporation and condensation, resulting in heavy dew or ground-fog.

e. **The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground:** When God created man He made him out of the most basic elements, **the dust of the ground**. There is nothing "spectacular" in what man is made of, only in the way those basic things are organized.

i. When the Bible speaks of **dust**, it means something of little worth, associated with lowliness and humility (Gen. 18:27; 1Sa.

2:8; 1Ki. 16:2). In the Bible, **dust** isn't evil and it isn't nothing; but it is *next* to nothing.

f. **And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being:** With this Divine breath man became **a living being**, like other forms of animal life (the term *chay nephesh* is used in Gen. 1:21, 1:21, and here). Yet only man is a **living being** made in the **image of God** (Gen. 1:26-27).

i. The word for **breath** in Hebrew is *ruach* - the word imitates the very sound of breath -

is the same word for *Spirit*, as is the case in both ancient Greek (*pneuma*) and Latin (*spiritus*). God created man by putting His *breath*, His *Spirit*, within him.

ii. "The implication, readily seen by any Hebrew reader, [is] that man was specially created by God's breathing some of His own breath into him." (Boice)

iii. The King James Version reads: *man became a living soul*. This makes some wonder if man *is* a soul, or if man *has* a soul. This passage seems to indicate that man *is* a soul, while passages like 1Th. 5:23

and Heb. 4:12 seem to indicate that man *has* a soul. It seems that the Scripture speaks in both ways, and uses the term in different ways and in different contexts.

B. Adam in the Garden of Eden.

1. (8-9) Two trees in the Garden of Eden.

The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

a. **The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden:** Eden was a **garden** specifically **planted** by God; it was a

place God made to be a perfect habitation for Adam (and later, Eve).

b. **There he put the man whom He had formed:** The details in the creation of Adam and Eve teach us something. After reading Genesis 1, we might assume man and woman were made at the same time, but the text doesn't specifically say so. We assume it. We don't know the details about man's creation until Genesis 2.

c. **Out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow:** The rest of Genesis chapter 2 does not present a different or contradictory account of creation. Rather, it is probably the history of creation from Adam's perspective.

This is Adam's experience of creation, which does not contradict the account of Gen. 1:1-2:7

- it fills it out.

i. In Mat. 19:4-5, Jesus referred to events in Genesis 1 and to events in Genesis 2 as one harmonious account.

d. **The tree of life . . . the tree of the knowledge of good and evil:** These two trees were among all the other trees God created and put in the Garden of Eden.

i. The **tree of life** was to grant (or to sustain) eternal life (Gen. 3:22). God still has a tree of life available to the His people (Rev. 2:7), which is in heaven (Rev. 22:2).

ii. The **tree of the knowledge of good and evil** was the "temptation" tree. Eating the fruit of this tree would give Adam an experiential knowledge of good *and* evil. Or, it is possible that it is called **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil** not so *man* would know good and evil, but so *God* could test good and evil in man.

2. (10-14) Rivers in the Garden.

Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around

the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.

a. **Now a river went out of Eden:** The whole feel of this account gives the sense that it was written by an actual eyewitness of the rivers and surroundings. Adam probably wrote this himself.

b. **The name of the first is Pishon:** These rivers are given specific names which answer to names of rivers known in either their modern or ancient world. However, the names of these rivers can't be used to determine the place of the Garden of Eden because the flood dramatically changed the earth's landscape and "erased" these rivers.

i. We know modern rivers today such as the **Tigris** or **Euphrates** because some rivers in the post-flood world were named after familiar pre-flood rivers by Noah and his sons.

3. (15-17) God's command to Adam.

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

a. **Put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it:** God put Adam into the most spectacular paradise the world has seen, but God put Adam there to do *work* (**to tend and keep it**). Work is something good for man and was part of Adam's perfect existence before the fall.

i. "The ideal state of sinless man is not one of indolence without responsibility. Work and duty belong to the perfect state." (Leupold) b. **Of the tree of the knowledge of**

good and evil you shall not eat: The presence of this tree - the presence of a choice for Adam -

was good because for Adam to be a creature of free will, there had to be a *choice*, some opportunity to rebel against God. If there is never a command or never something

forbidden there can then never be choice. God wants our love and obedience to Him to be the love and obedience of *choice*.

i. Considering all that, look at Adam's advantages. He only had *one way* he could sin and we have countless ways. There are many trees of temptation in our lives, but Adam had only one.

ii. God made this command originally to Adam, not to Eve; God had not yet brought woman out of man.

c. **In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die:** God not only made His command clear to Adam, but He also clearly explained the consequences for disobedience.

C. God creates the first woman.

1. (18) God declares He will make **a helper comparable** to Adam.

And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

a. **It is not good that man should be alone:** For the first time, God saw something that was **not good** - the aloneness of man. God never intended for man to be alone, either in the marital or social sense.

i. Marriage, in particular, has a blessed "civilizing" influence on man. The most wild, violent, sociopathic men in history have always been single, never under the plan God gave to influence men for good. This is *not good*!

b. **I will make him a helper comparable to him:** God's "blueprint" for creating this companion to Adam was to make a **helper comparable** to Adam.

i. Different versions of the Bible translate this idea in a variety of ways, but the idea is essentially the same in each of them: · *Helper meet (suitable, adapted, completing)* (Amplified) · *A companion . . . a helper suited to his needs* (Living) · *A helper such as he needs* (Beck) · *A helper correspondent to himself* (Septuagint Bible)

· *A helper suitable* (NIV, NASB) · *A help meet for him* (KJV) c.

A helper comparable: In reference to the marriage

relationship, God created woman to be a perfectly suitable helper to the man. This means God gave the plan and agenda to Adam, and he and the woman together work to fulfill it.

i. The phrase "in reference to the marriage relationship" is used because God has not ordained women to be helpers to men in authority (instead of being in authority themselves), except in marriage and in the church (1Ti. 2:12-13).

ii. God gives to man the responsibility (and the accountability) to be the leader in the home and gives to the woman the responsibility and the accountability to help him.

iii. This does not mean there is to be no help from the man to the woman (though in many cases this is sadly true). It means when God looks down from heaven upon the family, He sees a man in leadership, good or bad, faithful or not, to the calling of leadership. A true leader will, of course, help those helping him.

iv. We only see "helping" as a position of inferiority when we think like the world thinks. God considers positions of service as most important in His sight (Mat. 20:25-28).

d. **A helper comparable:** Not only was the woman to be a **helper**, but also she was made **comparable** to the man. She should be considered and honored as such. A woman or wife cannot be regarded as a mere tool or worker, but as an equal partner in God's grace and an equal human being.

2. (19-20) No helper was found comparable for Adam among the animals.

Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

a. **Brought them to Adam to see what he would call them:** If Adam had the capability to intelligently name all

the animals, it shows he was a brilliant man. Since at this time Adam's intellect had not yet suffered from the fall, he was probably the most brilliant man who ever lived. Adam was the first and greatest of all biologists and botanists.

b. **So Adam gave names:** Adam did not name any other animal after himself, calling any other animal "man" or "human." By this, we see he understood that he was essentially different from all the animals. They were not made in the image of God.

i. Mark Twain had a joke where he described Adam coming home to Eve after naming all the animals. Eve looked at an elephant and said, "What did you name that big animal?"

Adam replied, "I called it an elephant." Eve asked, "Why did you call it an elephant?"

Adam answered, "Because it looked like an elephant!"

c. **But for Adam there was not found a helper:** It was obvious to Adam that the animals came in pairs and he had no mate.

Since God deliberately had Adam name the animals after seeing his need for a partner (Gen. 2:18), God used this to prepare Adam to receive the gift of woman.

3. (21-22) God makes the first woman from Adam's side.

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

a. **God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam:** This is the first "surgery" recorded in history. God even used a proper anesthetic on Adam.

b. **The ribe which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman:** God used Adam's own body to create Eve to forever remind him of their essential oneness. As Adam came to know Eve he would see many ways that they were different, but he must never forget that they are

essentially one and that they are made of the same substance. They are more alike than they are different.

i. What exactly did God take from Adam's side to make Eve? We don't really know, and it doesn't really matter. Modern research into cloning and genetic replication shows every cell in our body contains the body's entire genetic blueprint. God took some of Adam's cells and changed their genetic blueprint in the creation of Eve.

Nevertheless, the story that women have one more rib than men because of the way Eve was created is a myth.

ii. We also know the Bride of Christ comes from the wound made in the side of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

iii. There is a beautiful Jewish tradition saying God made woman, not out of man's foot to be under him, nor out of his head to be over him, but "She was taken from under his arm that he might protect her and from next to his heart that he might love her." (Barnhouse)

c. **He made into a woman:** It is important to realize that there are not two beginnings to the human race, one in Adam and one in Eve. There was one beginning of the human race in Adam.

d. **And He brought her to the man:** God brought Eve to Adam and created Eve out of Adam. He was first - the source and the head.

She was created to be a helper perfectly suited to him. Thus the subordinate relationship of wives to husbands is found *before* the curse, not only after it.

4. (23) Adam's brilliant understanding of who Eve is and how she is related to him.

And Adam said:

"This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

a. **This is now bone of my bones:** Adam recognized that Eve was both like him (**bone of my bones and flesh of**

my flesh) and not like him (**woman . . . taken out of man**).

b. **Flesh of my flesh:** Adam understood the essential *oneness* in his relationship with Eve.

This point is so important that it is referred to several times in the New Testament, including the great marriage passage in Eph. 5:28-29: *so husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it (Eph. 5:28-29).

i. No one walks into a room and seeks the most uncomfortable seat. The natural concern we have for ourselves causes us to take care of ourselves. In a healthy marriage relationship the husband realizes the essential union he has with his wife, that he cannot bless her without blessing himself and he cannot mistreat or neglect her without mistreating or neglecting himself.

c. **She was taken out of Man:** Adam recognized that though he and Eve were one, she was not the same as him. He understood that two different people were becoming one. 1Pe. 3:7 tells husbands to recognize that they are one with someone different, someone whom they must understand: *Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel.*

i. If men and women are different, are they equal? Elisabeth Elliot, quoted in Boice: "In what sense is red equal to blue? They are equal only in the sense that both are colors in the spectrum. Apart from that they are different. In what sense is hot equal to cold?

They are both temperatures, but beyond this it is almost meaningless to talk about equality."

d. **She shall be called woman:** "*Woman* has been defined by many as compounded for *wo* and *man*, as if called *man's wo* because she tempted him to eat the forbidden fruit; but this is *no* meaning of the original word, nor could it be

intended, as the transgression was not then committed." (Clarke) 5. (24-25) The marriage of Adam and Eve.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

a. **They shall become one flesh:** The marriage principle stated here is based upon the dynamic of oneness yet distinction. A man and wife can truly come together in a **one-flesh** relationship, yet they must **be joined**. It is a spiritual fact, but the benefits of that oneness are not appropriated by accident or by chance.

b. **They shall become one flesh:** This passage forms the foundation for the Bible's understanding of marriage and family. Both Jesus (Matthew 19: 5) and Paul (Eph. 5:31) quoted it in reference to marriage.

i. "The institution of monogamous marriage, home, and family as the basic medium for the propagation of the race and the training of the young is so common to human history that people seldom pause to reflect on how or why such a custom came into being." (Morris)

ii. Many want to believe that the monogamous, two-parent family was invented in the 1950's by American television icons Ozzie and Harriet, but Adam and Eve are the original family. This is God's ideal family. This isn't polygamy. This isn't concubinage. This isn't the keeping of mistresses. This isn't adultery. This isn't homosexual co-habitation. This isn't promiscuity. This isn't living together outside the marriage bond. This isn't serial marriage.

This is God's ideal for the family, and even when we don't live up to it, it is still important to set it forth as God's ideal.

c. **One flesh:** The idea of **one flesh** is taken by many to be mainly a way of expressing sexual union. While sexual union is certainly related to the idea of **one flesh**, it is only one part of what it means to be **one flesh**. There are also important spiritual dimensions to **one flesh**.

i. Paul makes it clear the sexual union has *one flesh* implications even when we don't intend so, as when a man has sex with a prostitute (1Co. 6:16). Husband and wife become "one flesh" under God's blessing. In extramarital sex, the partners become "one flesh" under God's curse.

ii. In this sense, there is no such thing as "casual sex." Every sexual relationship at least begins a one-flesh bond. The bond will either be something beautiful (like the beautiful dancing of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers) or it will be something grotesque (like Siamese twins).

iii. It depends on whether the bonding takes place in a relationship with the right conditions: committed love, demonstrated by the marriage commitment, and a pursuit of true intimacy. Just because sex is taking place in marriage doesn't mean it is truly fulfilling God's purpose of bonding together a *one-flesh* relationship.

d. **They shall become one flesh:** Though an initial bond in a one flesh relationship can be formed at the first sexual relationship a couple has, the fullness of what God wants to do in the **one flesh** relationship takes time. It has to **become**.

e. **They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed:** Before the fall, Adam and Eve were both **naked . . . and not ashamed**. The idea of "nakedness" is far more than mere nudity. It has the sense of being totally open and exposed as a person before God and man. To be **naked . . . and not ashamed** means you have no sin, nothing to be rightly ashamed of, nothing to hide.

i. Adam and Eve knew they were physically naked - nude - before the fall. What they did not know was a sinful, fallen condition, because they were not in that condition before their rebellion.

ii. We often feel uncomfortable when someone stares at us. This is because we associate staring with prying, and we don't want people to pry into our lives. We want to remain

hidden and only reveal to other people what we want to reveal.

iii. When we want to be most attractive to someone else, we do the most to change our normal appearance. We have the thought, "If I really want to impress this person, I have to fix myself up." None of this feeling was present with Adam and Eve when they were **naked . . . and not ashamed**.

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2 By¹ the seventh day God finished the work that he had been doing,² and he ceased³ on the seventh day all the work that he had been doing. **3** God blessed the seventh day and made it holy¹ because on it he ceased all the work that he² had been doing in creation.³

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created – when the LORD God made the earth and heavens. **5** Now no shrub of the field had yet grown on the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. **6** Springs would well up from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground. **7** The LORD God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8 The LORD God planted an orchard in the east, in Eden; and there he placed the man he had formed. **9** The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow from the soil, every tree that was pleasing to look at and good for food.

(Now the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil were in the middle of the orchard.) **10** Now a river flows from Eden to water the orchard, and from there it divides into four headstreams. **11** The name of the first is Pishon; it runs through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. **12**

(The gold of that land is pure; pearls and lapis lazuli are also there). **13** The name of the second river is Gihon; it runs

through the entire land of Cush. **14** The name of the third river is Tigris; it runs along the east side of Assyria.

The fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the orchard in Eden to care for it and to maintain it. **16** Then the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat fruit from every tree of the orchard, **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will surely die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him." **19** The LORD God formed out of the ground every living animal of the field and every bird of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. **20** So the man named all the animals, the birds of the air, and the living creatures of the field, but for Adam no companion who corresponded to him was found. **21** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was asleep, he took part of the man's side and closed up the place with flesh. **22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the part he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. **23** Then the man said, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and unites with his wife, and they become a new family. **25**

The man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.

1 Now¹ the serpent² was more shrewd³ than any of the wild animals⁴ that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Is it really true that⁵ God⁶ said, 'You must not eat from any tree of the orchard'?"⁷

Guzik - Genesis 3:1-24

Genesis 3 - Man's Temptation and Fall

A. The temptation from the serpent.

1. (1) The serpent begins his temptation.

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.

And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

a. **The serpent:** The text here does not, by itself alone, clearly identify the **serpent** as Satan, but the rest of the Bible makes it clear this is Satan appearing as a serpent.

i. In Eze. 28:13-19 tells us that Satan was in Eden. Many other passages associate a serpent or a snake-like creature with Satan (such as Job. 26:13 and Isa. 51:9). Rev.

12:9 and 20:2 speak of *the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan*.

ii. The representation of Satan as a serpent makes the idea of Moses saving Israel by lifting up a bronze serpent all the more provocative (Num. 21:8-9), especially when Jesus identifies *Himself* with that very serpent (Joh. 3:14). This is because in this picture, the serpent (a personification of sin and rebellion) is made of *bronze* (a metal associated with judgment, since it is made with fire). The lifting of a bronze serpent is the lifting up of sin judged, in the form of a cross.

iii. Ezekiel 28 tells us Satan, before his fall, was an angel of the highest rank and prominence, even the "worship leader" in heaven. Isaiah 14 tells us Satan's fall had to do with his desire to be equal to or greater than God, to set his will against God's will.

b. **The serpent was more cunning than any beast:** Satan's effectiveness is often found in His cunning, crafty ways. We can't outsmart Satan, but we can overcome him with the power of Jesus.

i. It was the craftiness of Satan that made him successful against Eve: *as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness* (2Co. 11:3).

c. **And he said to the woman:** Apparently, before the curse pronounced in Gen. 3:14-15, the serpent was different

than what we know today as a serpent. This creature didn't *start* as a snake as we know it, it *became* one.

i. "The creature that tempted Eve became a serpent as a result of God's judgment on it, and it went slithering away into the bushes to the intense horror of Adam and Eve." (Boice)

ii. Demonic spirits evidently have the ability, under certain circumstances, to indwell human or animal bodies (Luk. 8:33). On this occasion, Satan chose to indwell the body of a pre-curse serpent.

iii. Poole says the woman wasn't surprised at the serpent's speaking because Adam and Eve had free conversation with angelic beings that often appeared in the form of men. If this is true, it wasn't so strange to Eve that an angelic being might appear to her in the form of a beautiful pre-curse serpent.

iv. Perhaps Satan made the voice supernaturally seem to come forth from the serpent, or perhaps Satan "said" this to Eve in her thoughts. *What* Satan said is more important than *how* he said it.

d. **To the woman:** Satan brought his temptation against the woman because he perceived she was more vulnerable to attack.

This is because she did not receive the command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil directly from God but through Adam (Gen. 2:15-17).

i. Perhaps Satan knew by observation Adam didn't do an effective job in communicating to Eve what the LORD told him. This failure on Adam's part made Eve more vulnerable to temptation.

ii. Satan will often attack a chain at its weakest link, so he gets at Adam by tempting Eve. The stronger ones in a "chain"

must expect attack against weaker links and support them against those attacks.

iii. It was also in God's plan to allow Satan to tempt Eve this way. If Adam would have sinned first, and if he had given the fruit to Eve, she might have a partial excuse before God: "I was simply obeying the head of our home. When he gave me the fruit, I ate of it."

e. **Has God indeed said:** Satan's first attack is leveled against the Word of God. If he can get Eve confused about what God said, or to doubt what God said, then his battle is partially won.

i. From the beginning, Satan has tried to undermine God's people by undermining God's Word. He can undermine just as effectively by getting us to *neglect* God's Word as by getting us to doubt it.

f. **"Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"** Satan took God's positive command (*Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat* [Gen. 2:16-17]) and rephrased it in a negative way: "God won't let you eat of every tree."

2. (2-3) Eve's reply to the serpent.

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

a. **And the woman said to the serpent:** Eve's first mistake was in even carrying on a discussion with the serpent. We are called to talk to the devil, but never to have a discussion with him. We simply and strongly tell him, " *The Lord rebuke you!* " (Jude 9) b. **We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:** Eve's knowledge of what she should not do is partially correct, but what she doesn't seem to know makes her all the more vulnerable to deception.

i. Eve does not seem to know the *name* of this tree; she only calls it **the tree in the midst of the garden**, instead of *the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* (Gen. 2:17).

ii. Eve misquoted God's command to Adam.

Her words, " **you shall not eat it**" and " **lest you die**" are close enough, but she added to the command and put words in God's mouth when she said, " **nor shall you touch it.**" Of course, it was a good idea to completely avoid the temptation; no good could come from massaging the fruit you're not supposed to eat. But it is a dangerous thing to teach the doctrines of man as if they are the commandments of God (Mat. 15:9).

iii. Clarke on **nor shall you touch it**: "Some Jewish writers . . . state that as soon as the woman had asserted this, the serpent pushed her against the tree and said, 'See, you have *touched* it, and are still alive; you may therefore safely *eat* of the fruit, for surely you shall not die.'"

c. **God has said**: Eve's ignorance of exactly what God said was really Adam's responsibility.

He did a poor job of relating to his wife the word God gave him.

i. We can almost picture Adam telling Eve, "See that tree in the middle of the garden?

Don't touch it or God says we'll die!" While this is better than saying nothing, what Adam *didn't* explain made a vulnerable place where Satan could attack.

d. **Lest you die**: This may seem like a small thing to hinge the destiny of the human race and all creation on. But the tree was nothing more than a restraint on Adam and Eve. It reminded them *they* were not God, that God had a legitimate claim on their obedience, and that they were responsible to Him.

3. (4-5) Satan's direct challenge to God's Word.

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

a. **You will not surely die**: Satan effectively laid the groundwork. He drew Eve into a discussion with him and planted the seed of doubt about God's Word, and he

exposed Eve's incomplete understanding of God's Word. Now he moves in for the kill, with an outright contradiction of what God said.

i. Satan can only effectively work when he has established a foothold. No one falls like Adam and Eve will fall, "all of a sudden." A foundation has been laid.

ii. This is why we are called to never *give place to the devil* (Eph. 4:27). This shows how remarkable it is that Jesus could say, "Satan *has nothing in Me*." (Joh. 14:30) b. **You will not surely die**: Satan first wanted Eve to forget all about what God said about the consequences of sin. When we know and remember the consequences of sin, we are more likely to give up the *passing pleasures of sin* (Heb. 11:25).

i. In Satan's direct challenge, he tries to get Eve to doubt the *goodness of God*. If God lies to her, how can He be good?

ii. In Satan's direct challenge, he tries to get Eve to doubt the *badness of sin*. If this fruit is something good for her, why doesn't God want her to have it?

iii. Satan wants us to see sin as something good that a bad God doesn't want us to have. His main lie to us is "sin is not bad and God is not good."

iv. "Satan and the flesh will present a thousand reasons to show how good it would be to disobey His command." (Barnhouse)

c. **In the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened**: Satan's temptation was all the more powerful because there was *truth* in it. It was true **your eyes will be opened**, and this was fulfilled (Gen. 3:7). But their eyes were instantly opened to their own sin and rebellion.

i. It is as if a deaf person was promised to be able to hear again, but all they could hear was screaming.

ii. Their eyes were opened, they did know good and evil, but not as *gods*. "Pure lie" is rarely effective in temptation. If Satan doesn't couple it with some truth, there is little power in his temptation.

d. **You will be like God, knowing good and evil:** The final enticement is the most powerful, because it was how Satan himself fell, wanting to be equal with God. Eve tried to become a god herself by her rebellion against God.

i. Jewish rabbis embellish on Satan's temptation to Eve: "Nothing but malice has prompted God's command, because as soon as you eat of it, you will be as God. As He creates and destroys worlds, so will you have the power to create and destroy. As He does kill and revive, so will you have the power to kill and revive. God Himself ate first of the fruit of the tree, and then He created the world. Therefore, He forbids you to eat of it, lest you create other worlds . . .

Hurry now and eat the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, and become independent of God, lest He bring forth still other creatures that will rule over you."

ii. The goal of becoming God is the center of so many non-Christian religions, including Mormonism. But in our desire to be gods, we become like Satan (who said, *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High* [Isa. 14:13-14]) instead of being like Jesus, who came as a servant (Mat. 20:28).

iii. The New Age movement and the desire to be "god" are just as strong as ever.

According to a 1992 survey, as many as 12 million Americans can be considered active participants in the New Age movement, and another 30 million are avidly interested. If all these people were brought together in a church-like organization, it would be the third largest religious denomination in America. More than 90% of the subscribers to New Age Magazine are college graduates, compared to half the general population.

iv. In 1995, New Age influence made it all the way to the White House. New Age author Marianne Williamson (writer of *A Course In Miracles*), guru to many of Hollywood's spiritual seekers, spent a night at the White House as the personal guest of Hillary Clinton. And Anthony Robbins, motivational

guru and king of late-night infomercials, consulted with President Clinton at Camp David. Robbins is also recognized as a leader in the New Age movement.

B. The sin of Adam and Eve and the fall of the human race.

1. (6) Adam and Eve both disobey God in their own way.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

a. **So when the woman saw:** Eve surrendered to this temptation in exactly the way John describes in 1Jo. 2:16. First, she gave in to the lust of the flesh (**saw that it was good for food**), then she gave in to the lust of the eyes (**pleasant to the eyes**), then she gave in to the pride of life (**desirable to make one wise**).

i. Jesus was tempted in the same three-fold way: an appeal to the physical appetites, an appeal to covetous and emotional desires, and an appeal to pride (Mat. 4:1-11).

b. **The woman saw that the tree was good for food:** Eve's perceptions were partially true and partially false. The tree was *not* really **good for food**, though Eve was deceived into thinking it was so. The fruit probably was **pleasant to the eyes**, though that shouldn't mean much. And it was only true in Eve's *mind* that the tree was **desirable to make one wise**.

i. We can see the total truth of Paul's statement in 1Ti. 2:14, that Eve was *deceived* when she sinned. In her mind, she thought she was doing something good for herself.

c. **She took of its fruit and ate:** Satan could tempt Eve, but she didn't have to take it. The taking was all her doing. Satan couldn't cram the fruit down her throat. Eve was responsible.

She couldn't rightly say, "the devil made me do it."

i. As with every temptation, God had made for Eve a *way of escape* (1Co. 10:13). She could have simply run from Satan and the tree, but Eve didn't take God's way of escape.

d. **She also gave to her husband with her:** Not only did Eve sin, but she became the agent of temptation for Adam. But when Adam ate, he was not deceived as Eve was. Adam sinned with his eyes wide open, in open rebellion against God.

i. Therefore, it is Adam, not Eve, who bears the responsibility for the fall of the human race and for the introduction of death into the created order (Rom. 5:12, 1Co. 15:22).

Eve was tricked into sinning; Adam knew exactly what he was doing (1Ti. 2:14).

ii. Many have speculated that Adam sinned because he didn't want Eve to be alone in the fall, and he ate of the fruit out of a romantic impulse. This may well be true, but it makes Adam's sin not one bit less rebellious. Rebellion against God is not "better" when motivated by a romantic impulse.

iii. "Take and eat" will one day become verbs of salvation, but only after Jesus had lived in the world of Adam's curse and surrendered to death.

2. (7) The nakedness of Adam and Eve.

Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

a. **Then the eyes of both of them were opened:** Seemingly, it was only after the sin of Adam that they knew of their sinful state. They knew they were **naked**, in the sense of having their shame exposed to all creation.

b. **They new that they were naked:** Psa.

104:2 and Mat. 17:2 suggest that light can be a garment for the righteous. It may be that Adam and Eve were previously clothed in God's glorious light, and the immediate loss of this covering of light left them feeling exposed and **naked**.

i. "It is more than probable that they were clothed in light before the fall, and when they sinned the light went out." (Barnhouse)

c. **The eyes of both of them were opened:** The way they saw themselves changed, but also the way

they saw the entire world was now different. After the fall, everything looked worse.

i. Was it good or bad that Adam and Eve saw their nakedness and felt terrible about it? It was good, because it is good to feel guilty when you have done something wrong.

d. **They sewed fig leaves together:** Their own attempt to cover themselves took much ingenuity, but not much wisdom. Fig leaves are said to have a prickly quality, which would make for some pretty itchy coverings.

i. Every attempt to cover our own nakedness before God is just as foolish. We need to let Jesus cover us (Rev. 3:5, 18), and put on Jesus Himself as our covering garment (Gal.

3:27). The exhortation from Jesus is for us: *Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*

(Rev. 16:15)

ii. Obviously, they covered their genital areas. In virtually all cultures, adults cover their genital areas, even though other parts of the human body may be more or less exposed from culture to culture.

iii. This is not because there is something intrinsically "dirty" in our sexuality, but because we have both received our fallenness and pass it on genetically through sexual reproduction. Because of this, God has implanted it in the minds of men that more modesty is appropriate for these areas of our body.

3. (8-9) Adam and Eve hide from God; God calls out to them. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

a. **They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:** Adam and Eve knew that when they heard the LORD coming, He would want to

be with them. This was how the LORD had fellowship with Adam and Eve, in a very natural, close, intimate way.

i. Leupold on **walking in the garden in the cool of the day**: "The almost casual way in which this is remarked indicates that this did not occur for the first time just then . . . There is extreme likelihood that the Almighty assumed some form analogous to the human form which was made in His image."

ii. We can assume this is God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, appearing to Adam and Eve before His incarnation and birth at Bethlehem, because of God the Father it is said, "*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*" (Joh.

1:18), and no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father. (1Ti. 6:16) iii. "**Cool of the day**" is literally "the breeze of the day." From Hebrew geography and culture, we might guess this means late afternoon.

b. **Adam and his wife hid themselves**: This shows that Adam and Eve knew that their attempt to cover themselves failed. They didn't proudly show off their fig-leaf outfits; they knew their own covering was completely inadequate, and they were embarrassed before God.

c. **Where are you?** This is not the interrogation of an angry commanding officer, but the heartfelt cry of an anguished father.

God obviously knew where they were but He also knew a gulf had been made between Himself and man, a gulf that He Himself would have to bridge.

C. God confronts Adam and Eve with their sin.

1. (10-12) Adam tries to explain his sin.

So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

a. I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid:

Sin made Adam afraid of God's presence and afraid of God's voice. Ever since Adam, men run from God's presence and don't want to listen to His Word.

i. We are still made in God's image, so we *want* to be in the presence of God and hear His voice, while at the same time, we are afraid of Him.

b. Who told you that you were naked? God knew the answer to this question. He asked it because He allowed Adam to make the best of a bad situation by repenting right then and there, but Adam didn't come clean and repent before God.

i. We all sin, but when we sin, we can still give glory to God by openly confessing without shifting the blame onto others (Jos.

7:19-20).

ii. There is often nothing you can do about yesterday's sin (though in some cases you may be able to make restitution). Yet you can do what is right before God right now by confessing and repenting.

c. Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?

God confronted Adam's problem squarely. This wasn't primarily a wardrobe problem or a fear problem or a self-esteem problem. This was a *sin* problem and Adam's wardrobe, fear, or self-understanding could not be addressed until the sin problem was addressed.

d. Then the man said: Notice that to this point, God has not addressed Eve at all. Adam, being the head, is the problem here.

e. The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate: Adam's attempt to blame Eve is completely consistent with human nature. Few of us are willing to simply say as David did, *I have sinned against the LORD* (2Sa. 12:13) i. Significantly, if there is any blame, it is on Adam, not Eve. Not only does Adam unjustly accuse

Eve, but also he refuses to accept proper responsibility for his part in her sin.

ii. By saying " **the woman whom You gave to be with me,**" Adam essentially blames God for the sin saying, " *You* gave me the woman, and *she* is the problem." Adam wasn't content to blame Eve; he had to blame God also.

2. (13) Eve's reply to God.

And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

a. **The serpent deceived me, and I ate:** When confronted by God, Eve doesn't necessarily shift the blame when she admits the serpent deceived her and then she ate. This much was true, she had been deceived, and she did eat.

b. **Deceived me:** The only problem comes when we fail to see that being deceived is sin in itself. It is sin to *exchange the truth of God for the lie* (Rom. 1:25).

D. The curse and its aftermath.

1. (14-15) God's curse upon the serpent.

So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

a. **And the LORD God said to the serpent:** When God spoke to Adam and to Eve, He asked them each questions. God didn't ask Satan (the being animating the serpent) any questions, because there was nothing to teach him.

b. **You are cursed more than all cattle:** The first part of the curse is directed at the animal that Satan used to bring the temptation. God commanded the serpent to slither on the ground instead of walking on legs like any other animal.

i. Adam and Eve must have been terrified as this once-beautiful creature called a serpent was transformed into the creeping, slithering, hissing snake we know today.

They must have thought, "It's our turn next!"

ii. **I will put enmity between you and the woman:** In addition, there is a natural aversion between mankind and serpents, especially on the part of women.

c. **You shall eat dust all the days of your life:** This was true of the serpent as an animal, but it is also true of Satan. To **eat dust** has the idea of *total defeat* (Isa. 65:25, Mic. 7:17).

God's judgment on Satan is for him to always know defeat. He will always reach for victory, but always fall short of it.

i. Satan was, in his own thinking, majestic and triumphant over Jesus on the cross, but he failed. In attacking Jesus, Satan made his own doom certain.

ii. In Jesus, we share in the victory over Satan: *And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.* (Rom. 16:20) d. **Enmity between you and the woman, and**

between your seed and her Seed: The second part of the curse is directed against Satan himself. God placed a natural animosity between Satan and mankind. **Enmity** has the idea of ill will, hatred, and a mutual antagonism.

Satan's hatred of Eve was nothing new; it was already present - but now man will, generally speaking, have antagonism towards Satan.

i. The "friendship" Eve and the serpent seemed to enjoy earlier in the chapter is finished. There is now a natural fear of Satan in the heart of man.

ii. If we are born naturally rebellious against God, we are also born cautious and afraid of Satan. One must be hardened to willingly and knowingly serve Satan. Instinctively, we don't serve God or Satan; we serve ourselves (which is fine with Satan).

e. **He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel:** In this, God prophesies the doom of Satan, showing

that the real battle is between Satan and the **Seed** of the Woman.

i. There is no doubt this is a prophecy of Jesus' ultimate defeat of Satan. God announced that Satan would wound the Messiah (**you shall bruise His heel**), but the Messiah would crush Satan with a mortal wound (**He shall bruise your head**).

ii. The **heel** is the part within the serpent's reach. Jesus, in taking on humanity, brought Himself near to Satan's domain so Satan could strike Him.

iii. This prophecy also gives the first hint of the virgin birth, declaring the Messiah - the Deliverer - would be the Seed of the Woman, but not of the man.

iv. Gen. 3:15 has been called the *protoevangelium*, the first gospel. Luther said of this verse: "This text embraces and comprehends within itself everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures." (Leupold) f.

He shall bruise your head: For God to see the defeat of Satan at Satan's first flush of victory shows God knew what He was doing all along. God's plan wasn't "set back" when Adam and Eve sinned, because God's plan was to bring forth something greater than man in the innocence of Eden. God wanted more than *innocent* man; His plan is to bring forth *redeemed* man.

i. Redeemed man - this being who is greater than innocent man - is only possible because man had something to be redeemed from.

2. (16) God's curse upon the woman.

To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

a. **I will greatly multiply your sorrow:** God first cursed the woman with multiplied sorrow.

Men and women have each known sorrow throughout history, yet the unique sorrow of women is well known.

i. Under Jesus, some of the effects of the curse are relieved, and it has been the Christianizing of society that brought rights and dignity to women.

ii. "It is difficult for women in Christian lands to realize the miseries of their hundreds of millions of sisters in pagan lands, where the lot of women is little above that of cattle.

Where the gospel has gone, the load has been lifted, and woman in Christ has become the reflection of the redeemed Church, the bride of Christ." (Barnhouse) b. **Your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children:**

The first curse upon women is a broad one. It has the idea that women would experience pain in regard to their children in general, not just in the act of giving birth. God ordained that the pain with which women bring children into this world be an example of the pain they experience more generally in life.

i. It has been observed that women bring forth children with more pain than just about any other creature.

c. **Your desire shall be for your husband:** This is true of women in a way that it is not true for men. "This verse will be understood better when it is realized that the desire of man toward his wife alone is solely by God's grace and not by nature." (Barnhouse) d. **Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you:**

The idea is to contrast the woman's **desire** and the husband's **rule over** her. This speaks of an inherent challenge in embracing the husband's role as leader of the home and family.

i. This same word for **desire** is used in Gen.

4:7 of the *desire* of sin to master over Cain.

Because of the curse, Eve would have to fight a desire to master her husband, a desire that works against God's ordained order for the home.

ii. The principle of Adam's headship as a husband was established before the fall (see Gen. 2:18 and 2:22). Now the curse on Eve makes it much harder for her to submit and flow with God's institution of male headship in the home.

iii. "As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight from his headship.

Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination." (Susan T. Foh, cited in Boice)

3. (17-19) God's curse upon the man.

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

a. **Because you have heeded the voice of your wife:** It wasn't just as if Adam took Eve's advice. He chose to be with Eve instead of obeying God. There is a sense in which *idolatry of Eve* was an aspect of Adam's disobedience against God.

b. **Cursed is the ground:** Because of Adam, there is a curse upon all creation. Before the curse on man, the ground only produced good.

After the curse, it will still produce good, but thorns and thistles will come faster and easier than good fruit.

c. **In toil you shall eat of it:** Adam worked before the curse, but it was all joy. Now work has a cursed element to it, with pain and weariness a part of work. *Is there not a time of hard service for man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man? Like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, and like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages* (Job.

7:1-2).

d. **Dust you are, and to dust you shall return:** The final curse upon man promised there would be an end of his toil and labor on the earth - but it was an end of *death*, not not an end of *deliverance*.

i. The curse of death shows that the result of Adam's sin extended to the entire human race. Because of Adam, sin entered the world (Rom. 5:12), death came to all mankind (Rom. 5:15, 1Co. 15:22), death reigned over man and creation (Rom. 5:17), all men were condemned (Rom. 5:18), and all men were made sinners (Rom. 5:19).

ii. The principle of Gal. 3:13 is established as we consider that Jesus bore each aspect of the curse upon Adam and Eve in its totality: *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us.*

- Sin brought pain to childbirth, and no one knew more pain than Jesus did when He, through His suffering, brought many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10)

- Sin brought conflict, and Jesus endured great conflict to bring our salvation (Heb. 12:3)

- Thorns came with sin and the fall, and Jesus endured a crown of thorns to bring our salvation (Joh. 19:2)

- Sin brought sweat, and Jesus sweat, as it were, great drops of blood to win our salvation (Luk. 22:44)

- Sin brought sorrow, and Jesus became a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, to save us (Isa. 53:3)

- Sin brought death, and Jesus tasted death for everyone that we might be saved (Heb. 2:9)

4. (20) The naming of Eve.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

a. **Adam called his wife's name Eve:** Up to Gen. 3:20, the woman has never been called Eve. We are so used to saying "Adam and Eve"

that we assume she already had her name. But to this point, she was called a *female* (Gen.

1:27), a *helper comparable* (Gen. 2:18), a *woman* (Gen. 2:22, 23), and a *wife* (Gen. 2:24, 25; 3:8). This does not mean God did not have a name for Eve, but we are told what the name is in Gen. 5:2: *He called them Mankind*.

i. The idea that the woman takes her name from the husband, and the idea that both genders are encompassed in terms like *mankind*, *humanity*, and *chairman*. Our use of these terms is not merely cultural, it is Biblical.

ii. A woman gains more of her identity from her husband than the man does from the wife. For this reason, women should take special care in which man they marry.

b. **Because she was the mother of all living:** Adam named her **Eve**, even though she was not a mother at all at the time. She was not even pregnant yet. Adam named her in faith, trusting God would bring forth a deliverer from the woman, because God said He would defeat Satan through the *Seed of the woman* (Gen.

3:15).

5. (21) God clothes Adam and Eve in the skins of animals.

Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

a. **The LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them:** God wanted Adam and Eve clothed, not naked. "God gave His approval of the sense of shame which had led our first parents to cover their nakedness." (Leupold) i. The world's oldest profession is not prostitution, but the clothing business (Gen.

3:7).

b. **Tunics of skin:** In order for Adam and Eve to be clothed, a sacrifice had to be made. An animal had to die. *Without shedding of blood there is no remission*. (Heb. 9:22) i. There are only two religions; there is the religion of fig leaves and there is the religion of God's perfect provision through Jesus. ii. Covering ourselves with our good works is like Adam and Eve trying to cover themselves with fig leaves. Our good works are like monopoly money - great for monopoly, but not

legal tender. Your good works are essential to what it takes to live out your life, but they are not legal tender before God.

iii. Adam and Eve were clothed in a garment that was purchased with the life of another.

We are clothed with a garment of righteousness that was purchased with the life of another, Jesus Christ.

c. **And clothed them:** This indicates that Adam and Eve were saved. Adam had faith in God's promise of a Savior, and God provided a covering for them through a sacrifice. We will see Adam and Eve in heaven.

6. (22-24) God sets cherubim to guard the Tree of Life.

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.

And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"; therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

a. **Behold, the man has become like one of us, to know good and evil:** The idea behind this phrase is difficult to understand. Perhaps there is a note of sarcasm by God here (as Elijah used in 1Ki. 18:27), regarding Satan's empty promise to become like gods. Or, perhaps the idea focuses on man's greater knowledge (though in a bad sense) now that he has the experiential knowledge of evil.

b. **And take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:** In mercy, God protected Adam and Eve from the horrible fate of having to live forever as sinners by preventing them from eating from the tree of life.

c. **The LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden:** We don't know if Adam and Eve *wanted* to stay in the garden of Eden.

Perhaps they felt if they left the garden, they might never see God again because it was the only place where they met Him.

d. He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden: Cherubim are always associated with the presence and glory of God (Ezekiel 10, Isaiah 6, Revelation 4). When cherubim are represented on earth (such as in the tabernacle, Exo. 25:10-22), they mark a *meeting place* with God.

Though Adam and Eve and their descendants were prevented from eating the fruit of the tree of life (by God's mercy), they could still come there to meet God. This was their "holy of holies." Therefore it was important to send a cherubim with **a flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life.**

i. "Any angel of the lowest rank could have dealt with Adam. The flaming sword was pointed against Satan to keep him from destroying the way of access to the altar, which God had set up." (Barnhouse) ii. This is the last historical mention of the garden of Eden in the Bible. We can speculate that God did not destroy it, but left it to the effects of the curse and suppose that it generally deteriorated from its original condition, blending into the surrounding geography.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat¹ of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; **3** but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, 'You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it,¹ or else you will die.'"² **4** The serpent said to the woman, "Surely you will not die,^{note} **5** for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with

her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the orchard at the breezy time of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the orchard. **9** But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** The man replied, "I heard you moving about in the orchard, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." **11** And the LORD God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" **12** The man said, "The woman whom you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it." **13** So the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman replied, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the wild beasts and all the living creatures of the field!

On your belly you will crawl and dust you will eat all the days of your life.

15 And I will put hostility between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; her offspring will attack your head, and you will attack her offspring's heel."

16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your labor pains; with pain you will give birth to children.

You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you."

17 But to Adam he said, "Because you obeyed your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

cursed is the ground thanks to you; in painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, but you will eat the grain of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat food until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you will return."

20 The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. **21** The LORD God made garments from skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. **22** And the LORD God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not be allowed to stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." **23** So the LORD God expelled him from the orchard in Eden to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken. **24** When he drove the man out, he placed on the eastern side of the orchard in Eden angelic sentries who used the flame of a whirling sword to guard the way to the tree of life.

1 Now¹ the man had marital relations with² his wife Eve, and she became pregnant³ and gave birth to Cain. Then she said, "I have created⁴ a man just as the LORD did!"⁵

Guzik - Genesis 4:1-26

Genesis 4 - Cain and Abel

A. Cain's murder of Abel.

1. (1) The birth of Cain.

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

a. **Now Adam knew Eve his wife:** This is the first specific mention of sex in the Bible. The term "**knew**" or "to know" is a polite way of saying they had sexual relations and the term is used often in the Bible in this sense (Gen. 4:17, 4:25, 38:26, Jdg. 11:39, 1Sa. 1:19).

i. There is power in this way of referring to sex. It shows the high, interpersonal terms in which the Bible sees the sexual relationship. Most terms and phrases people use for sex today are either coarse or violent, but the Bible sees sex as a means of knowing one another in a committed relationship. "**Knew**" indicates an act that contributes to the bond of unity and the building up of a one-flesh relationship.

ii. We have no reason to believe Adam and Eve did not have sex before this. Adam and Eve were certainly capable of sexual relations before the fall, because there is nothing inherently impure or unclean in sex.

b. **And bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD"** : The name **Cain** basically means, "I've got him" or "here he is." It is likely Eve thought that Cain was the seed that God promised, the deliverer who would come from Eve (Gen. 3:15). There is a sense in which Eve said, "I have *the* man from the LORD."

i. Under normal circumstances, parents want good things for their children. They wonder if their children are destined for greatness.

Adam, and especially Eve, had these expectations for Cain, but it went farther than normal parental hopes and expectations. Adam and Eve expected Cain to be the Messiah God promised.

ii. Eve thought she held in her arms the Messiah, the Savior of the whole world, but she really held in her arms a killer.

c. **A man from the LORD**: Eve had faith to believe that the little baby she held would be a man. No baby had ever been born before. It is possible Adam and Eve wondered if their descendants would come forth fully mature, as they did.

2. (2-5) The birth of Abel and the offerings of Cain and Abel. Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel.

Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

a. **Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground**: We see agriculture and the domestication of animals were practiced among the earliest humans.

Adam and his descendants did not spend tens of thousands of years living as hunter-gatherer cave dwellers.

b. **Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD:** We can surmise that Cain brought his offering to the tree of life because cherubim guarded the tree of life (Gen.

3:24), and cherubim are always associated with the dwelling place or meeting place with God (Exo. 25:10-22). Cain and everyone else on the earth at that time probably met with God at the tree of life, where the cherubim were.

c. **The LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering:** Abel brought an offering of blood (**the firstborn of his flock**) and Cain brought an offering of vegetation (**the fruit of the ground**). Many assume that this was the difference between their offerings, but grain offerings were acceptable before God (Leviticus 2), though not for an atonement for sin.

i. "The word for offering, *minchah*, is used in its broadest sense, covering any type of gift man may bring Neither of the two sacrifices is made specifically for sin. Nothing in the account points in this direction." (Leupold)

ii. The writer to the Hebrews makes it plain why the offering of Abel was accepted and the offering of Cain was rejected: *By faith Abel offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain* (Heb. 11:4). Cain's offering was the effort of dead religion, while Abel's offering was made in faith, in a desire to worship God in spirit and in truth.

d. **Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat:** This shows Abel's offering was extra special. The **fat** of the animal was prized as its "luxury," and was to be given to God when the animal was sacrificed (Lev. 3:16-17; 7:23-25). The burning of fat in sacrifice before God is called *a sweet aroma to the LORD* (Lev. 17:6).

i. The offering of Cain was no doubt more aesthetically pleasing; Abel's would have been a bloody mess. But God

was more concerned with faith in the heart than with artistic beauty.

ii. Here, it is one lamb for a man. Later, at the Passover, it will be one lamb for a family. Then, at the Day of Atonement, it was one lamb for the nation. Finally, with Jesus, there was one Lamb who takes away the sin of the whole world (Joh. 1:29).

e. **Respected . . . did not respect:** We don't precisely know how Can and Abel knew their sacrifices were accepted or not accepted.

Seemingly, there was some outward evidence making it obvious.

i. There are Biblical examples of having an acceptable sacrifice consumed by fire from God (Jdg. 6:21; 1Ki. 18:38; 1Ch. 21:26; 2Ch. 7:1). Perhaps an acceptable sacrifice, brought to the cherubim at the tree of life, was consumed by fire from heaven or from the flaming swords of the cherubim (Gen. 3:24).

f. **Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell:** Cain's anger was undoubtedly rooted in pride. He couldn't bear that his brother was accepted before God and he was not. It is even possible that this was public knowledge, if God consuming the sacrifice with fire indicated acceptance.

i. The epidemic of sin is quickly becoming worse. Cain now commits the rather sophisticated sins of spiritual pride and hypocrisy.

3. (6-7) God's warning to Cain.

So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry?

And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

a. **Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?** God dealt with Cain in terms of loving confrontation

instead of automatic affirmation. He made it clear that he would be accepted *if* he did well.

i. Of course, God knew the answers to those questions, but He wanted Cain to know and stop what was happening inside himself.

b. **If you do not do well, sin lies at the door:** God warned Cain about the destructive power of sin. Cain can resist sin and find blessing, or he can give in to sin and be devoured.

c. **And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it:** We prevent sin from ruling over us by allowing God to master us first. Without God as our master, we will be slaves to sin.

4. (8) Cain murders Abel.

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

a. **Now Cain talked with Abel his brother:** The sense is that Cain planned to catch Abel by surprise, lulling him with pleasant conversation.

This shows that Cain committed *premeditated* murder, and therefore clearly ignored God's way of escape.

b. **Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him:** No human had ever died or been killed before, but Cain saw how animals were be killed for sacrifice. He extinguished Abel's life in the same way.

i. The downward course of sin has progressed quickly. Now the hoped-for redeemer is a murderer, and the second son is the victim of murder. Sin wasn't "nipped in the bud," and it could not be contained.

B. God confronts Cain.

1. (9) God questions Cain.

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"

a. **Where is Abel your brother:** God knew the answer to this question. He asked Cain because He wanted to give him

the opportunity to confess his sin and start to do right after doing wrong.

i. How futile it was for Cain to lie to God! It was madness for him to think God didn't know where Abel was, or that he could actually hide his sin from God.

b. **Am I my brother's keeper?** This reply of Cain is famous. The fact of the matter is that he *was* supposed to be his brother's keeper, but was instead his brother's murderer, and he murdered him for the lowest of reasons. Able had not injured Cain in any way. Cain's murderous rage was inspired purely by a spiritual jealousy.

i. Jude 11 warns of the *way of Cain*, which is unbelief, empty religion leading to jealousy, persecution of those truly godly, and murderous anger.

ii. There is no greater curse on the earth than empty, vain religion, those who *have a form of godliness, but deny the power of God* (2Ti. 3:5). Many are deathly afraid of "secular humanism" or atheism, but dead religion sends more people to hell than anything else.

2. (10-12) God's curse upon Cain.

And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

a. **The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground:** The idea of blood crying out to God from the ground is repeated in the Bible. Num. 35:29-34 describes how the blood of unpunished murderers defiles the land.

i. The blood of Abel spoke, and it spoke of judgment. The blood of Jesus also speaks, but of better things, of grace and of sin having been judged (Heb. 12:24).

b. **So now you are cursed from the earth:** The curse upon Cain was that Adam's curse would be amplified in

regard to him. If bringing forth food from the earth would be hard for Adam (Gen. 3:17-18), it would be impossible for Cain (who was a farmer). If Adam were driven from Eden (Gen. 3:24), Cain would find no resting-place on all the earth (**a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth**).

3. (13-15) Cain complains of the severity of God's judgment. And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."

And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

a. **My punishment is greater than I can bear!** Cain didn't feel bad about his sin, but only about his punishment. Many are like him.

i. "One of the clearest marks of sin is our almost innate desire to excuse ourselves and complain if we are judged in any way." (Boice)

ii. "One of the consequences of sin is that it makes the sinner pity himself instead of causing him to turn to God. One of the first signs of new life is that the individual takes sides with God against himself." (Barnhouse)

b. **Whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold:** As significant as God's judgment against Cain was, God did not want Cain killed by others. This is possibly because the population of the earth was precariously low anyway.

c. **The LORD set a mark on Cain:** Therefore, God set an identifying and protective mark upon Cain. Despite the speculation of some, nobody really knows what this mark upon Cain was.

C. Cain and his descendants.

1. (16-17) Cain moves away and marries.

Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son; Enoch.

a. **And Cain knew his wife:** We don't know where did Cain got his wife. Gen. 5:4 says Adam had several sons and daughters. Cain obviously married his sister. Though marrying a sister was against the law of God according to Lev. 18:9, 18:11, 20:17, and Deu. 27:22 (which even prohibits the marrying of a half-sister), this was long before God spoke that law to Moses and the world.

i. Here, necessity demanded that Adam's sons marry his daughters. And at this point, the "gene pool" of humanity was pure enough to allow close marriage without harm of inbreeding. But as a stream can get more polluted the further it gets from the source, there came a time when God decreed there no longer be marriage between close relatives because of the danger of inbreeding.

ii. Even Abraham married his half-sister Sarah (Gen. 20:12). God did not prohibit such marriages until the time of Moses (Lev.

18:9). Marrying a brother or sister was not forbidden until God forbade it.

b. **And he built a city:** Here we see the beginning of industry and of urbanization - and that it is strongly man-centered (**and called the name of the city after the name of his son**), not God-centered. The fall of the human race continues to pick up speed.

2. (18-22) The generations following Cain.

To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech. Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal. He was the

father of all those who play the harp and flute. And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

a. **To Enoch was born Irad:** The picture is one of rapid advancement. Succeeding generations quickly made progress in areas such as the founding of a city (Gen. 4:17), home building, music and the arts, and metalworking.

i. The idea that mankind actually advanced very quickly goes against most modern theories, but archaeology can only evaluate on the basis of what is preserved, and thus is rather speculative.

b. **Methishael begot Lamech:** The name **Lamech** may mean, "conqueror." He was the seventh from Adam on Cain's side. Lamech's arrogance (Gen. 4:23-24) is a contrast to Enoch, who was the seventh from Adam on Seth's line (Jude 14).

c. **Lamech took for himself two wives:** Lamech was the first bigamist in history, going against God's original plan for one man and one woman to become one flesh (Gen. 2:24, Mat.

19:4-8). The names of his wives and daughter show the emphasis in his heart: **Adah** means, "pleasure, ornament, or beauty." **Zillah** means, "shade" probably referring to a luxurious covering of hair. His daughter's name was **Naamah**, which means, "loveliness." Lamech's culture was committed to physical and outward beauty.

3. (23-24) Lamech's chest-thumping boast.

Then Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech! For I have killed a man for wounding me, even a young man for hurting me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

a. **I have killed a man for wounding me:** The way Lamech boasts about his murder of another, and the way he

believes he can promise a greater retribution than God, shows a progressive degeneracy among humanity. Things are going downhill fast, a true devolution.

b. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold: This is all a picture of humanism. The city is Cain's city; the focus of Lamech is his beautiful wives and his own perceived strength. But for all of Lamech's boasting, neither he nor his descendants are ever heard of again in the Bible. He came to nothing.

4. (25-26) Seth is born to Adam and Eve.

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD.

a. And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son: Adam and Eve had many children who are not specifically named, but Seth is worthy of mention because he "replaced" Abel and was the one to whom the promise of a deliverer from the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) would be passed.

b. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD: Even in those wicked days, the worship of God was not unknown. Some have called Gen. 4:26 "the first revival," because it is the first indication of a spiritual resurgence after a clear decline.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Then she gave birth¹ to his brother Abel.² Abel took care of the flocks, while Cain cultivated the ground.³

3 At the designated time¹ Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground for an offering² to the LORD. **4** But Abel brought some of the firstborn of his flock – even the fattest of them. And the LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering,^{note} **5** but with Cain and his offering he was not pleased. So Cain became very angry, and his expression was downcast.

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? **7** Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it.”

8 Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” And he replied, “I don’t know! Am I my brother’s guardian?”

10 But the LORD said, “What have you done?

The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me from the ground! **11** So now, you are banished from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. **12** When you try to cultivate the ground it will no longer yield its best for you. You will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.” **13** Then Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is too great to endure! **14**

Look! You are driving me off the land today, and I must hide from your presence. I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth; whoever finds me will kill me.” **15** But the LORD

said to him, “All right then, if anyone kills Cain, Cain will be avenged seven times as much.” Then the LORD put a special mark on Cain so that no one who found him would strike him down. **16** So Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

17 Cain had marital relations with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was building a city, and he named the city after his son Enoch.

18 To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael. Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

19 Lamech took two wives for himself; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah. **20**

Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the first of those who live in tents and keep livestock. **21** The name of his brother was

Jubal; he was the first of all who play the harp and the flute.

22 Now Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-Cain, who heated metal and shaped all kinds of tools made of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

23 Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah! Listen to me! You wives of Lamech, hear my words!

I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for hurting me.

24 If Cain is to be avenged seven times as much, then Lamech seventy-seven times!"

25 And Adam had marital relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Seth, saying, "God has given me another child in place of Abel because Cain killed him." **26** And a son was also born to Seth, whom he named Enosh. At that time people began to worship the LORD.

1 This is the record¹ of the family line² of Adam.

When God created humankind,³ he made them⁴ in the likeness of God.

Guzik - Genesis 5:1-32

Genesis 5 - The Descendants of Adam

A. Introduction to the genealogy.

1. (1-2) Adam's "signature."

This is the book of the genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created.

a. **This is the book of the genealogy of Adam:** There is good reason to believe this is the end of Adam's direct account, which was preserved and passed down to Moses who acted as an editor.

i. The **history of the heaven and earth** comprises the things regarding creation that no man witnessed, (and was given by revelation to either Adam or Moses). This **history** ended at Gen. 2:4 and from there to this point is Adam's "account."

b. **And called them Mankind:** The human race - **mankind** - was given the name "man"

by God from the beginning. It is not sexist or gender biased to call the human race by the general heading "mankind," because God does this.

2. Thoughts on genealogies.

a. One can arrange the following genealogies in a sequential manner and chart out a time line.

However, one cannot establish an absolutely reliable timeline with this method, because Biblical genealogies are not always complete.

Sometimes generations are skipped over.

b. If one takes the genealogies as being without omission, the time of Adam comes to be some 4,000 to 5,000 years before Christ. Even with omissions, it is hard to imagine that the time of Adam was significantly more than perhaps 10,000 years before Jesus.

i. This puts the Biblical record at incredible variance with the assertions of modern science. Yet there are good reasons to believe God created the earth with age "built in," even as Adam and the trees of Eden had age "built" into them.

c. We are also confronted with the problem of extremely long life spans. In this chapter, no one lived less than 365 years (and this is Enoch, who was a special case), and Methuselah lived a total of 969 years. How is this possible?

i. Some have thought this is speaking figuratively or counting months as years (but then Enoch fathered Methuselah when he was five and one-half years old).

ii. It is more likely that people did live much, much longer before the flood. This is because the degenerative effects of the fall on the human gene pool had not yet accumulated greatly, and because the environment in the pre-flood world was so different, with the blanket of water vapors surrounding the earth (Gen. 1:6-8). In the post-flood world, life spans quickly came down to the life-spans we are familiar with today.

d. During this period, the world would be populated quickly. One writer has estimated that if Adam, during his lifetime, saw only half the children he could have fathered grow up, and if only half of those got married, and if only half of those who got married had children, then even at these conservative rates, Adam would have seen more than a million of his own descendants.

i. Using these calculations, we can say that by the time of the flood, there could have been seven billion people on the earth.

e. Genealogies can be very instructive. They speak to us of both the absolutely *historical* character of the Scriptures, and are a powerful testimony to the end of every person on this earth.

i. "Have you never heard of one who heard read, as the lesson for the Sabbath-day, that long chapter of names, wherein it is written that each patriarch lived so many hundred years, 'and he died'? Thus it ends the notice of the long life of Methuselah with 'and he died,' The repetition of the words, 'and he died,' woke the thoughtless hearer to a sense of his mortality, and led to his coming to the Savior." (Spurgeon, *The Word a Sword*) B. The descendants of Adam through Seth.

1. (3-5) Adam.

And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.

a. **And begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth:** Even as Seth was in Adam's fallen **image** and **likeness**, so also are every one of us. We are all sons and daughters of Adam, born fallen even as Adam was fallen. It would be redundant to say it, but every

other person has been born in Adam's **image** and **likeness** except Jesus.

b. **And he had sons and daughters:** This tells us that Adam had many other sons and daughters who are not specifically named in the Scriptures. These **daughters** became the wives for the **sons** of Adam.

2. (6-17) From Seth to Mahalaleel.

Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. After he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died. Enosh lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. After he begot Cainan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died. Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalalel. After he begot Mahalalel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died. Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. After he begot Jared, Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.

3. (18-27) From Jared to Methuselah.

Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died. Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah.

After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived

seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had sons and daughters.

So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

a. **Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him:** Enoch, the son of Jared, was carried away to God in a miraculous way.

b. **Enoch walked with God:** Walking with God means walking by faith (2Co. 5:7), walking in the light (1Jo. 1:5-7), and walking in agreement with God (Amo. 3:3). After walking like this with God, it is as if one day God told Enoch, "You don't need to walk home. Why don't you just come home with Me?"

i. Heb. 11:5 tells us the foundation of Enoch's walk with God: *By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* You can't walk with God, or please God, apart from faith

c. **After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God:** It seems Enoch began to walk with God in a special way after the birth of **Methuselah**. The name Methuselah means, "when he is dead, it shall come." At the birth of Methuselah, Enoch had a special awareness from God that judgment was coming, and this was one of the things that got him closer in his walk with God.

i. Jude 14 also tells us Enoch was a prophet; even from his vantage point long ago, he could see the second coming of Jesus (*Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly . . .*).

d. **So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died:** Methuselah's long life was no accident. It was because of the grace of God. When Methuselah died, the flood came. God kept him alive longer than anybody to give people as long as possible to repent.

4. (28-32) From Lamech to Noah.

Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed." After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and had sons and daughters.

So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

a. **Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. And he called his name Noah:** If these genealogies are consecutive, Seth died when Noah was 14 years old. Noah could have known Adam's son.

b. **And he died:** The overwhelming emphasis of Genesis 5 is that all these men *died*. They were all under sin and all subject to death.

Some of them - many of them - were great men, but none of them was the deliverer God had promised.

i. "This is the greatest glory of the primitive world, that it had so many good, wise, and holy men at the same time. We must not think that these are ordinary names of plain people; but next to Christ and John the Baptist, they were the most outstanding heroes this world has ever produced. And on the Last Day we shall behold and admire their grandeur." (Luther, cited in Boice) © 2006 David Guzik - *No distribution beyond personal use without permission* **2** He created them male and female; when they were created, he blessed them and named them "humankind."¹

3 When¹ Adam had lived 130 years he fathered a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and he named him Seth. **4** The length of time Adam lived after he became the father of Seth was 800 years; during this time he had other sons and daughters.^{note} **5** The entire lifetime of Adam was 930 years, and then he died.

6 When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. **7** Seth lived 807 years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters. **8**

The entire lifetime of Seth was 912 years, and then he died.

9 When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. **10** Enosh lived 815 years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters. **11**

The entire lifetime of Enosh was 905 years, and then he died.

12 When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. **13** Kenan lived 840 years after he became the father of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters.

14 The entire lifetime of Kenan was 910 years, and then he died.

15 When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. **16** Mahalalel lived 830 years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters. **17** The entire lifetime of Mahalalel was 895 years, and then he died.

18 When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. **19** Jared lived 800 years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters.

20 The entire lifetime of Jared was 962 years, and then he died.

21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. **22** After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God for 300 years, and he had other sons and daughters. **23** The entire lifetime of Enoch was 365 years. **24** Enoch walked with God, and then he disappeared because God took him away.

25 When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. **26** Methuselah lived 782 years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters. **27** The entire lifetime of Methuselah was 969 years, and then he died.

28 When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. **29**

He named him Noah, saying, "This one will bring us comfort from our labor and from the painful toil of our hands because of the ground that the LORD has cursed."

30 Lamech lived 595 years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters. **31** The entire lifetime of Lamech was 777 years, and then he died.

32 After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

1 When humankind¹ began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born² to them,³

Guzik - Genesis 6:1-22

Genesis 6 - Man's Wickedness; God Calls Noah

A. The wickedness of man in the days of Noah.

1. (1-2) Intermarriage between the **sons of God** and the **daughters of men**.

Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

a. **When men began to multiply on the face of the earth:** During these days of rapid population expansion (especially because of long life spans in the pre-flood world), there was a problem with ungodly intermarriage between the **sons of God** and the **daughters of men**.

b. **The sons of God saw the daughters of men:** Many have believed the **sons of God** were those from the line of Seth, and the **daughters of men** were from the line of Cain, and this describes an intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly, something God specifically prohibits (Deu. 7:1-4, 2Co. 6:14).

i. But this approach leaves many unanswered questions: Why did this make God angry enough to wipe out almost all the earth's population? Why was there something "unnatural" about the offspring of these unions? The text in no way offers answers to these important questions.

c. **The sons of God saw the daughters of men:** It is more accurate to see the **sons of God** as either demons (angels in rebellion against God) or uniquely demon-possessed men, and the **daughters of men** as human women.

i. The phrase "**sons of God**" clearly refers to angelic creatures when it is used the three other times in the Old Testament (Job.

1:6, 2:1, and 38:7). The translators of the Septuagint translated **sons of God** as "angels." They clearly thought it referred to angelic beings, not people descended from Seth.

ii. Jude 6 tells us of the *angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own habitation*. Jude goes on (Jude 7) to tell us they sinned *in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh*.

Here in Genesis 6, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, there was an unnatural sexual union.

iii. It is useless to speculate on the nature of this union. Whether it was brought about by something like demon possession, or whether angels have power permanently to assume the form of men is not revealed. But we should understand the occult is filled with sexual associations with the demonic, and there are those today who actively pursue such associations.

iv. Jude 6 also makes it clear what God did with these wicked angels. They are *reserved in everlasting chains under darkness from the judgment of the great day*. By not keeping their proper place, they are now kept in chains. Their sinful pursuit of freedom has put them in bondage.

v. 1Pe. 3:19-20 tells us Jesus went to these disobedient spirits in their prison and proclaimed His victory on the cross over them.

vi. An objection offered to this understanding is found in Mat. 22:30, where Jesus said angels *neither marry nor are given in marriage*; but Jesus never said angels were sexless,

and He was also speaking about faithful angels (*angels of God in heaven*), not rebellious ones.

vii. From the book of 1 Enoch, which is not inspired scripture, but may still contain some accurate accounts: "And it came to pass that the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children . . . [They] took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments . . . And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants . . .

And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways."

d. **And they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose:** We can deduce *why* Satan sent his angels to intermarry (either directly or indirectly) with human women. Satan tried to pollute the genetic "pool" of mankind with a satanic corruption, to put a genetic "virus" to make the human race unfit for bringing forth the *Seed of the woman* - the Messiah - promised in Gen. 3:15.

i. "The Savior could not be born of a demon-possessed mother. So if Satan could succeed in infecting the entire race, the deliverer could not come." (Boice)

ii. And Satan *almost* succeeded. The race was so polluted that God found it necessary to start again with Noah and his sons, and to imprison the demons that did this so they could never do this again.

2. (3-4) God's response to this great wickedness.

And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

a. **My Spirit shall not strive with man forever:** God did not allow the human race to stay in this rebellious place forever. This means there is a "point of no return" in our rejection of God. God will not woo us forever; there is a point where He will say "no more."

i. All the more reason for us to say *today* is the day we will respond to Jesus instead of waiting for another day. We have no promise God will draw us some other day.

b. **Yet his days will be one hundred and twenty years:** This is not the outside life span of man but the time left until the judgment of the flood. The flood happened 120 years after this announcement.

c. **Giants on the earth in those days:** This refers to the unnatural offspring of the union between the **sons of God** and the **daughters of men**, though there were people of unusual size on the earth both before and after the flood (**and also afterward**). These ones before the flood were unique because of the demonic element of their parentage. They were the **mighty men of old, men of renown**.

3. (5-8) The great wickedness of man in Noah's day.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them."

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

a. **Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually:** This says a lot. It means there was no aspect of man's nature not corrupted by sin.

i. "A more emphatic statement of the wickedness of the human heart is hardly conceivable." (Vriezen, quoted in Kidner) ii. Jesus said, "*as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*" (Mat. 24:37). In other words, the conditions of the world before the coming of Jesus will be like the conditions of the world before the flood: · Exploding population (Gen. 6:1) · Sexual perversion (Gen. 6:2) · Demonic activity (Gen. 6:2) · Constant evil in the heart of man (Gen.

6:5)

· Widespread corruption and violence (Gen. 6:11)

b. **The LORD was sorry that He had made man . . . He was grieved in His heart:** God's sorrow at man, and the grief in His heart, are striking. This does not mean that creation was out of control, nor does it mean that God hoped for something better but was unable to achieve it. God knew all along that this was how things would turn out, but our text tells us loud and clear that as God sees His plan for the ages unfold, it affects Him. God is not unfeeling in the face of human sin and rebellion.

c. **But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD:** While God commanded all the earth to be cleansed of this pollution, He found one man with whom to begin again: **Noah**, who **found grace in the eyes of the LORD**. Noah didn't *earn* grace; he *found* it. No one earns grace, but we can all *find* it.

i. It was true then, and it is true today: *But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more* (Rom. 5:20).

B. God calls Noah to build the Ark.

1. (9-10) Noah and his sons.

This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

a. **Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations:**

This description of Noah - unique to him - not only refers to

the righteous life of Noah, but also to the fact he was yet uncorrupted by Satan's attempt to sow a "virus" among the genetic pool of mankind. We could translate "**perfect in his generations**" as, "Noah was pure in his genetic profile."

b. **Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth:** Noah's three sons will figure into the account in a significant way. God will use them as a foundation for the rest of the human race.

2. (11-13) The corruption of the earth and the grace of God. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

a. **The earth also was corrupt . . . and the earth was filled with violence:** Because of the corruption and violence on the earth, and the extent of the corruption, God told Noah that He would judge the wicked along with the earth.

b. **I will destroy them with the earth:** Some wonder if this is too harsh a judgment, or if it shows God to be cruel or a monster. However, since the fall in Genesis 3, every human being has a death sentence. The timing and method of that death is completely in the hands of God.

i. "On what grounds would God be told that He can bring death to millions of people at the end of a 'normal' life span, but that He may not do it in any other way?" (Barnhouse)

c. **And God said to Noah:** God told all of this to Noah with the intention of saving Noah and his family. In the midst of such corruption and judgment, there is also grace. Instead of wiping out the entire race, God preserved a remnant.

3. (14-16) God tells Noah to build an ark.

"Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is

how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.

You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks."

a. **Make yourself:** This means this was Noah's project. He was not to simply contract it out to someone else.

b. **This is how you shall make it:** The ark was as long as a 30-story building is high (about 450 feet or 150 meters), and it was about 75

feet (25 meters) wide and 45 feet (15 meters) high. What is described is not really a boat, but a well-ventilated barge, meant only to float and not to sail anywhere. After all, an **ark** is a chest, not a ship; this refers to the "shoebox" shape of the vessel.

i. The ark, roughly the shape of a shoebox, was plenty large enough (about the size of the Titanic), and had a cubit-wide opening (18 inches) all the way around the top.

ii. It was not until 1858 that a boat bigger than the ark was built. The ark was certainly big enough to do the job. If the ark carried two of every *family* of animal, there were around 700 pairs of animals; but if the ark carried two of every *species* of animals, there were around 35,000 pairs of animals.

iii. The average size of a land animal is smaller than a sheep. The ark could carry 136,560 sheep in *half* of its capacity, leaving plenty of room for people, food, water, and whatever other provisions were needed.

c. **You shall make it:** God had not yet told Noah *why* he must build an ark. At this point, all Noah knew was that God will judge the earth, and he was supposed to build a big barge. Since it had not rained yet on the earth, it is reasonable to suppose Noah didn't know what God was meant yet.

d. **You shall make it:** And Noah *did* make it.

Beyond the Bible, there is rich historical evidence for the reality of Noah's Ark.

i. In 275 B.C. Berosus, a Babylonian historian, wrote: "But of this ship that grounded in Armenia some part still remains in the mountains . . . and some get pitch from the ship by scraping it off."

ii. Around 75 A.D. Josephus said the locals collected relics from the ark and showed them off to his very day. He also said all the ancient historians he knew of wrote about the ark.

iii. In 180 A.D. Theophilus of Antioch wrote: "the remains [of the ark] are to this day to be seen . . . in the mountains."

iv. An elderly Armenian man in America said that as a boy, he visited the ark with his father and three atheistic scientists in 1856.

Their goal was to disprove the ark's existence, but they found it and became so enraged they tried to destroy it, but could not because it was too big and had petrified.

In 1918 one of the atheistic scientists (an Englishman) admitted on his deathbed the whole story was true.

iv. In 1876 a distinguished British statesman and author, Viscount James Bryce, climbed Ararat and reported finding a four-foot long piece of hand-tooled timber at an altitude of more than 13,000 feet (4,300 meters).

vi. Six Turkish soldiers claimed to see the ark in 1916.

vii. In the early part of this century, a Russian aviator named Vladimire Rokovitsky claimed the discovery of Noah's ark. He was stationed in southern Russia near the Turkish border and Mount Ararat. As he tested a plane he and his co-pilot flew over Ararat and discovered on the edge of a glacier what he described as a boat the size of a battleship. He said it was partially submerged in a lake, and he could see there was an opening for a door nearly 20 feet (7 meters) square, but the door was missing.

Rokovitsky told his commanding officer and an expedition was dispatched to find the ark and photograph it. The report

was forwarded to the Czar, who was soon overthrown and the photos and the report perished.

viii. In 1936 a young British archaeologist named Hardwicke Knight hiked across Ararat and discovered interlocking hand-tooled timbers at a height of 14,000 feet (4,600 meters).

ix. During World War II two pilots saw and photographed something they believed was the ark on Mount Ararat.

x. There have been many more recent attempts to find and document the ark, but they have been hindered by politics and surrounded in controversy.

e. **Cover it inside and outside with pitch:** The **pitch** worked to waterproof the wood. God told Noah to cover it with pitch **inside and outside**, which makes it possible that the ark was preserved for a long time. It is possible God still has a purpose for the ark, to use it to remind the world of a past judgment shortly before a future judgment.

i. Peter, in 2Pe. 3:1-7, relates the future judgment to the judgment of the flood saying, unbelievers *willfully forget . . . the world that then existed perished being flooded with water*. Perhaps, before Jesus returns, God will make it even more necessary for people to *willfully forget* these things.

ii. Because of this mention of **pitch** (a petroleum product) in what most people think is the Middle East, John D. Rockefeller looked for (and found) oil in that region based on this verse.

4. (17-21) Why the ark must be built and what Noah must do.

"And behold, I Myself am bringing floodwaters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of

animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."

a. **Everything that is on the earth shall die:** We can only wonder what Noah felt when he heard this remarkable announcement from God.

God called Noah to an essential role in the greatest judgment - and greatest salvation - the world had seen.

b. **But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark:** Despite the dramatic judgment coming, God will make a covenant with Noah, and he and his family will be saved. God will also use Noah to save a remnant of each animal so the earth could be populated with people and animals after the flood.

c. **Take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself:** God also commanded Noah to take all the food he could. There must be a lot of food for Noah and all the animals.

5. (22) Noah's obedience.

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did.

a. **Thus Noah did:** When given this staggering job to do, Noah did it. We don't hear of him complaining or rebelling; he simply obeyed.

i. The words, "**so he did**" cover an awful lot of material and years; yet Noah did not shrink from what God told him to do.

b. **According to all that God commanded him, so he did:** The Bible presents Noah as a great hero of God. He was an outstanding example of righteousness (Eze. 14:14), a preacher of righteousness (2Pe. 2:5), and Noah condemned the world by offering salvation in the ark that the whole world rejected (Heb.

11:7).

i. Noah was a *preacher of righteousness* (2Pe. 2:5), yet in his 120-year ministry it seems that no one was saved.

ii. "The work of building the ark was laborious, costly, tedious, dangerous, and seemingly foolish and ridiculous; especially when all things continued in the same posture and safety for so many scores of years together; whereby Noah, without doubt, was all that while the song of the drunkards, and the sport of the wits of that age. So it is not strange that this is mentioned as an heroic act of faith."

(Poole) **2** the sons of God¹ saw that the daughters of humankind were beautiful. Thus they took wives for themselves from any they chose. **3** So the LORD said, "My spirit will not remain in¹ humankind indefinitely,² since³ they⁴ are mortal.⁵ They⁶ will remain for 120 more years."⁷

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days (and also after this) when the sons of God were having sexual relations with the daughters of humankind, who gave birth to their children. They were the mighty heroes of old, the famous men. **5** But the LORD saw that the wickedness of humankind had become great on the earth. Every inclination of the thoughts of their minds was only evil all the time. **6** The LORD regretted that he had made humankind on the earth, and he was highly offended. **7** So the LORD said, "I will wipe humankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth - everything from humankind to animals, including creatures that move on the ground and birds of the air, for I regret that I have made them."

8 But Noah found favor in the sight of the LORD.

9 This is the account of Noah.

Noah was a godly man; he was blameless among his contemporaries. He walked with God. **10** Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth was ruined in the sight of God; the earth was filled with violence. **12** God saw the earth, and indeed it was ruined, for all living creatures on the earth were sinful. **13** So God said to Noah, "I have decided that all living creatures

must die, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. Now I am about to destroy them and the earth. **14** Make for yourself an ark of cypress wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and out. **15** This is how you should make it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. **16**

Make a roof for the ark and finish it, leaving 18 inches from the top. Put a door in the side of the ark, and make lower, middle, and upper decks. **17** I am about to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy from under the sky all the living creatures that have the breath of life in them.

Everything that is on the earth will die, **18** but I will confirm my covenant with you. You will enter the ark – you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

19 You must bring into the ark two of every kind of living creature from all flesh, male and female, to keep them alive with you. **20** Of the birds after their kinds, and of the cattle after their kinds, and of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you so you can keep them alive. **21** And you must take for yourself every kind of food that is eaten, and gather it together. It will be food for you and for them.

22 And Noah did all that God commanded him – he did indeed.

1 The LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, for I consider you godly among this generation.”¹

Guzik - Genesis 7:1-24

Genesis 7 - God Destroys the World with a Flood

A. Final preparations for the flood.

1. (1) God invites Noah into the ark.

Then the LORD said to Noah, “Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation.

a. **Come into the ark:** The idea is that God will be with Noah in the ark, so He called Noah to **come into the ark**

with Him.

b. **I have seen that you are righteous:** Noah spent the years before the flood in active obedience. He not only believed God would send the flood; he obeyed what God told him to do in preparation for it.

2. (2-9) Noah gathers all the animals and his family.

"You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." And Noah did according to all that the LORD

commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.

a. **You shall take with you:** Some wonder how the animals came to Noah or how Noah got them. In Gen. 6:20 God said the animals would *come to* Noah by migration. In some animals, God has created a migratory instinct (which can operate in an amazing manner). It is no difficulty for Him to miraculously place an urge to migrate to the ark in each pair of animals He planned to be preserved in the ark.

b. **Two by two they went into the ark to Noah:** God never has a problem getting the animals to do what He wants. Only man is more stupid than the animals. *The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.* (Isa. 1:3) 3. (10-12) God brings the waters upon the earth.

And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's

life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

a. **After seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth:** Noah, the animals, and his family had to wait in the ark seven days for the rain to come. They had never seen rain up to this time. This was a real test of faith - to wait a week after more than 100 years of preparation.

b. **The windows of heaven were opened:** This is when the great *waters which were above the firmament* (Gen. 1:7) broke up. These waters formed the huge "blanket" of water in the upper part of the earth's atmosphere since creation.

c. **The fountains of the great deep that were broken up:** Waters came up from under the earth also, no doubt accompanied by great geological catastrophe.

d. **Forty days and forty nights:** The number 40 becomes associated with testing and purification, especially before coming into something new and significant. This is seen in Moses' time on Mount Sinai (Exo. 24:18, Deu.

9:25), the spies' trip to Canaan (Num. 13:25), Israel's time in the wilderness (Num. 14:33, 32:13), Elijah's miraculous journey to Sinai (1Ki.

19:8), and Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mar. 1:13).

4. (13-16) All enter the ark and the door is shut.

On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark; they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

a. **Went in as God had commanded him:** This summary statement describes how everything was fulfilled exactly as

the LORD had spoken. All things were ready for the flood God would bring upon the earth.

b. **And the LORD shut him in:** Noah did not have to shut the door on anyone's salvation; God did it. After the same pattern, it is never our job to disqualify people from salvation. We let God shut the door.

i. God kept the door open until the last possible minute, but there came a time when the door had to shut. When the door is open, it is open, but when it is shut, it is shut. Jesus is *He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens* (Rev.

3:7).

ii. The ark was salvation for Noah, but condemnation for the world. There were no second chances for those left out.

B. Noah in the ark during the flood.

1. (17-23) The flood described.

Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive.

a. **The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth:** The description of the flood in this passage is so complete and specific that it is impossible to reconcile a

local flood with the Biblical record. Despite the claims of some, this was a global deluge.

i. If this were not a global flood, then the ark itself would be unnecessary. If this were only a local flood, then God's promise to never again bring such a flood is false. If this were only a local flood, the Bible is wrong when it traces all of humanity back to Noah's sons and other passages that speak of a universal flood (such as Psa. 104:5-9 and 2Pe. 3:5-6).

ii. Literally hundreds of people groups have their own accounts and legends of the flood.

One of the most remarkable is the Babylonian account, which is similar to the Genesis account in many ways and is clearly drawn from it. Since all mankind came from Noah's sons, all mankind remembers the flood.

iii. Boice specifically cites the legends of the Samo-Kubo tribe of New Guinea, the Athapascan Indians of America, the Papago Indians of Arizona, Brazilian tribes, Peruvian Indians, African Hottentots, natives of Greenland, native Hawaiian islanders, Hindus, Chinese, Egyptians, Greeks, Persians, Australian natives, the Welsh, Celts, Druids, Siberians, and Lithuanians.

iv. Of the more than 200 cultures that have their own account of the flood the following aspects of the story are common:

- 88% describe a favored family
- 70% attribute survival to a boat
- 95% say the sole cause of the catastrophe is a flood

- 66% say that the disaster is due to man's wickedness

- 67% record that animals are also saved
- 57% describe that the survivors end up on a mountain

- Many of the accounts also specifically mention birds being sent out, a rainbow, and eight persons being saved b. **And the mountains were covered:**

This took a lot of water, but there is plenty of water on the earth today to do this - but because of the topography of the earth, the water is collected into oceans. If the earth were a perfect sphere, the

oceans would cover the land to a depth of two-and-a-half to three miles.

Before the cataclysmic flood, the earth may have been much nearer to a perfect sphere.

c. **All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died:** In the Scopes Monkey Trial, Clarence Darrow humiliated William Jennings Bryan by asking him if he believed every word in the Bible. When Bryan said he did, Darrow asked him how the fish drowned in the flood.

Bryan didn't know the answer, gave a great, confused speech, and died the next day. If only he would have known the Bible better, he would have known it says this about the **breath of the spirit of life**. The fish did not die in the flood; only animals with the **breath** of life in them died, the animals on dry land.

i. God did just as He said. Virtually all of Noah's contemporaries did not believe God would do just as He said. Though it took 120 years, God demonstrated that He keeps His promises and is totally faithful.

2. (24) The flood lasted 150 days without receding.

And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

a. **One hundred and fifty days:** Some suggest that God put some or many of these animals into a period of hibernation for this period, meaning that less food, space, and "damage control" was needed.

b. **One hundred and fifty days:** God provides many animals today with an amazing instinct for hibernation. It would be no difficulty for Him to miraculously impart a unique instinct for these particular animals.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** You must take with you seven¹ of every kind of clean animal,² the male and its mate,³ two of

every kind of unclean animal, the male and its mate, **3** and also seven¹

of every kind of bird in the sky, male and female,² to preserve their offspring³ on the face of the earth. **4** For in seven days I will cause it to rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the ground every living thing that I have made.” **5** And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the floodwaters engulfed the earth. **7** Noah entered the ark along with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives because of the floodwaters. **8** Pairs of clean animals, of unclean animals, of birds, and of everything that creeps along the ground, **9** male and female, came into the ark to Noah, just as God had commanded him. **10** And after seven days the floodwaters engulfed the earth.

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month – on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst open and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. **12** And the rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 On that very day Noah entered the ark, accompanied by his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, along with his wife and his sons’ three wives. **14** They entered, along with every living creature after its kind, every animal after its kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, everything with wings. **15** Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life came into the ark to Noah. **16** Those that entered were male and female, just as God commanded him. Then the LORD shut him in.

17 The flood engulfed the earth for forty days. As the waters increased, they lifted the ark and raised it above the earth.

18 The waters completely overwhelmed the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the waters. **19**

The waters completely inundated the earth so that even all the high mountains under the entire sky were covered. **20**

The waters rose more than twenty feet above the mountains. **21** And all living things that moved on the earth died, including the birds, domestic animals, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all humankind. **22** Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. **23** So the LORD destroyed every living thing that was on the surface of the ground, including people, animals, creatures that creep along the ground, and birds of the sky. They were wiped off the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark survived. **24** The waters prevailed over the earth for 150 days.

1 But God remembered¹ Noah and all the wild animals and domestic animals that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind to blow over² the earth and the waters receded.

Guzik - Genesis 8:1-22

Genesis 8 - Noah and Family Leave the Ark

A. God remembers Noah.

1. (1) God focuses His attention on Noah again.

Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.

a. **God remembered Noah:** This is an *anthropomorphism* (a non-literal picture of God in human terms we can understand). Certainly, God never *forgot* Noah, but at this point God again turned His active attention towards Noah.

b. **God made a wind to pass over the earth:** God knew how to make the waters subside. Even a big problem like this was not a big problem to God.

2. (2-5) As the floodwaters recede, the ark rests on Mount Ararat.

The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased.

Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

a. **On the mountains of Ararat:** In a sense, Mount Ararat was not a very "smart" place to leave the ark. Leaving the ark at a high altitude and mountainous terrain meant a difficult departure for everyone and everything in the ark.

b. **Mountains of Ararat:** However, if God's purpose was to put the ark in a place where it might be preserved for thousands of years, He chose an excellent place for it.

3. (6-12) Birds are used to test the condition of the earth.

So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark.

Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

4. (13-19) Noah, his family, and all the animals leave the ark.

And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh

day of the month, the earth was dried. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

B. God's covenant with Noah.

1. (20) Noah builds an altar and offers a sacrifice.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

a. **Then Noah built an altar:** Noah's first act after leaving the ark was to worship God through sacrifice. His gratitude and admiration of God's greatness lead him to worship God.

b. **Took of every clean animal and every clean bird:** As is the nature with true sacrifice, this was a costly offering unto God. With only seven of each animal on the ark, Noah risked extinction by sacrificing some of these animals.

But costly sacrifice is pleasing to God.

i. The sacrifices we are called to offer to God should also cost us something. We should present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1), the giving of our resources is a sacrifice (Phi. 4:18), and we should give the sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:15).

ii. Costly sacrifice pleases God, not because God is greedy and wants to get as much from us as He can but because God Himself sacrificed at great cost (Eph. 5:2 and Heb.

9:26, 10:12). God wants costly sacrifice from us because it shows we are being conformed into the image of Jesus, who was the greatest display of costly sacrifice. As Paul wrote in Eph. 5:2, we should be like Jesus in this regard: *And walk in*

love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

iii. May we think like David, who said he would never offer to God *that which costs me nothing* (2Sa. 24:24).

2. (21-22) God's promise to Noah and to all mankind.

And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not cease."

a. **The LORD smelled a soothing aroma:** Noah's costly sacrifice pleased God. It was as if God smelled the great aroma of the roasting meat (indicating that God loves a barbecue), and He then made this wonderful promise to Noah and to man.

i. Of course, the Bible speaks anthropomorphically here. More pleasing to God than the smell of the sacrifice was the *heart* of Noah in his sacrifice.

b. **Cold and heat, winter and summer:** This speaks of the profound climatic and ecological changes in the earth since the "blanket" of water vapors covering the earth was "emptied."

Now there are seasonal and temperature variations.

i. The result of this change is found in the rapidly decreasing life spans. There will never be 900-year-old men after the flood.

ii. The mass extinction of animals revealed in the fossil record (such as dinosaurs and other such creatures) probably took place shortly after the flood, when the earth was changed so dramatically and plunged into an ice age.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The fountains of the deep and the floodgates of heaven were closed,¹ and the rain stopped falling from the sky. **3** The waters kept receding steadily¹

from the earth, so that they² had gone down³ by the end of the 150 days.

4 On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the ark came to rest on one of the mountains of Ararat.^{note} **5** The waters kept on receding until the tenth month. On the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains became visible.

6 At the end of forty days, Noah opened the window he had made in the ark **7** and sent out a raven; it kept flying back and forth until the waters had dried up on the earth.

8 Then Noah sent out a dove to see if the waters had receded from the surface of the ground. **9** The dove could not find a resting place for its feet because water still covered the surface of the entire earth, and so it returned to Noah in the ark. He stretched out his hand, took the dove, and brought it back into the ark. **10** He waited seven more days and then sent out the dove again from the ark.

11 When the dove returned to him in the evening, there was a freshly plucked olive leaf in its beak! Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. **12** He waited another seven days and sent the dove out again, but it did not return to him this time.

13 In Noah's six hundred and first year, in the first day of the first month, the waters had dried up from the earth, and Noah removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. **14** And by the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was dry.

15 Then God spoke to Noah and said, **16** "Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives with you. **17** Bring out with you all the living creatures that are with you. Bring out every living thing, including the birds, animals, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. Let them increase and be fruitful and multiply on the earth!"

18 Noah went out along with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives. **19** Every living creature, every creeping thing, every

bird, and everything that moves on the earth went out of the ark in their groups.

20 Noah built an altar to the LORD. He then took some of every kind of clean animal and clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. **21** And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma and said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, even though the inclination of their minds is evil from childhood on. I will never again destroy everything that lives, as I have just done.

22 "While the earth continues to exist, planting time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night will not cease."

1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

Guzik - Genesis 9:1-29

Genesis 9 - God's Covenant with Noah and

Creation

A. God's covenant and instructions to Noah.

1. (1-4) Instructions for living in a new world.

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.

Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

a. **Be fruitful and multiply:** The world Noah entered from the ark was significantly different from the world he knew before. God gave Noah the same kind of mandate He gave Adam in the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:28), since Noah essentially began all over again.

b. **Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you:** And, even as Adam received instructions for eating (Gen. 1:29-30, 2:15-17), so does Noah. Yet now, Noah receives specific permission to eat animals, permission Adam was not given (as far as we know).

i. Perhaps this was because the earth was less productive agriculturally after the flood, because of the ecological changes.

Therefore God gave man permission to eat meat.

c. **The fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth:** If man now ate animals, then God would help the animals. For their protection God put in them a fear of mankind.

i. Again, presumably before the flood, man had a completely different relationship with the animals. God did not put this fear in animals because man did not look to them as food.

ii. "Did the horse know his own strength, and the weakness of the miserable wretch who unmercifully rides, drives, whips, goads, and oppresses him, would he not with one stroke of his hoof destroy his tyrant possessor? But while God hides these things from him he impresses his mind with the fear of his owner, so that . . . he is trained up for, and employed in, the most useful and important purposes." (Clarke) d. **But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood:** God also commands Noah that if animals are eaten, there must be a proper respect for the **blood**, which represents the life principle in the animal (Lev. 17:11, 17:14 and Deu. 12:23).

i. The importance of the idea of **blood** in the Bible is shown by how often the word is used. It is used 424 times in 357 separate verses (in the New King James Version).

- Blood was the sign of mercy for Israel at the first Passover (Exo. 12:13) · Blood sealed God's covenant with Israel (Exo. 24:8)

- Blood sanctified the altar (Exo. 29:12) · Blood set aside the priests (Exo. 29:20) · Blood made atonement for God's people (Exo. 30:10) · Blood sealed the new covenant (Mat. 26:28)

- Blood justifies us (Rom. 5:9) · Blood brings redemption (Eph. 1:7) · Blood brings peace with God (Col. 1:20)

- Blood cleanses us (Heb. 9:14 and 1Jo. 1:7)

- Blood gives entrance to God's holy place (Heb. 10:19) · Blood sanctifies us (Heb. 13:12) · Blood enables us to overcome Satan (Rev. 12:11)

2. (5-7) God gives to man the right and responsibility of capital punishment.

"Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood

shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth and multiply in it."

a. **Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning:**

According to God's command, when a man's blood is shed there must be an accounting for it, because **in the image of God He made man**. Because man is made in the image of God, his life is inherently precious and cannot be taken without giving account to God.

i. **By man his blood shall be shed** means because life is valuable, when murder is committed the death penalty is in order.

ii. In its original languages the Bible makes a distinction between *killing* and *murder*. Not all killing is murder, because there are cases where there is just cause for killing (self-defense, capital punishment with due process of law, killing in a just war). There are other instances where killing is accidental. This is killing, but not *murder*.

iii. The Bible also consistently teaches that the punishment of the guilty is the role of human government (Rom. 13:1-4) so as to restrain man's depravity. It also teaches that the guilt of unpunished murder defiles a land (Num. 35:31-34). As Luther said, "God establishes government and gives it the sword to hold wantonness in check, lest violence and other sins proceed without limit." (Boice)

b. **From the hand of every beast I will require it:** To see the strength of God's command, He even requires a reckoning for the life of man from **every beast**. God does not condone unlawful killing of any kind.

c. **Be fruitful and multiply:** This point was repeated because it needed emphasis. The earth badly needed repopulating.

3. (8-11) God makes a covenant with man and with all of creation.

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: "And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and

with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

a. **I establish My covenant:** This covenant was made with mankind (**you and your descendants after you**), and even with the animals (**every living creature that is with you**). God promised He would never again destroy all with a flood or cover the earth with a flood.

b. **Never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth:** God did not believe He did something wrong or too harsh in the flood. He made the promise because He did things in the post-flood world to guarantee that the exact evil conditions of the pre-flood world would never be precisely duplicated. These things included the imprisonment of the angels who sinned with human women (Jude 6) and shortening the life span of man.

i. However, when things again become *similar* to the days of Noah (Mat. 24:37), God will destroy the earth - but by fire, not by flood (2Pe. 3:1-7).

4. (12-17) The sign of God's covenant.

And God said: "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." And God said to Noah, "This

is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

a. **I set My rainbow in the cloud:** Because the blanket of water vapors was broken up in the flood and the water cycle of the earth changed after the flood, this may be the first occurrence of a rainbow. God used the rainbow as a sign to Noah and all generations that He would be faithful to His covenant.

b. **It shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth:** Every time we see a rainbow, we should remember the faithfulness of God and every one of His promises. He even says His covenant of peace with us is just as sure as His covenant with Noah and all generations.

i. *For this is like the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed, says the LORD, who has mercy on you.* (Isa. 54:9-10) c. **I will look on it to**

remember the everlasting covenant: The other mentions of a **rainbow** in the Bible are set in the context of God's enthroned glory (Eze. 1:28; Rev. 4:3 and 10:1). It is staggering to see God, in His glory, setting so close to Himself a reminder of His promise to man.

i. In Rev. 4:3, God's throne is surrounded by a green-hued rainbow. The rainbow is a reminder (in the midst of such supreme sovereignty) of God's commitment to His covenant with man.

ii. On the same principle, the believer *glories* in the sovereignty of God, because he knows God's sovereignty is *on his side*. It means no good purpose of God relating to the believer will ever be left undone.

B. Noah and his sons.

1. (18-19) The sons of Noah.

Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.

a. **The whole earth was populated:** From these three sons of Noah came the nations as we know them. The descendants of these three sons are listed in the "table of nations" provided in Genesis 10.

2. (20-23) The sin of Ham, Noah's son.

And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

a. **He drank of the wine and was drunk:** This is the first mention of drunkenness in the Bible. Some think it was only after the flood that man made (or was able to make) intoxicating drink.

i. Noah's own sinful and shameful actions show the foolishness of drunkenness. Well the Proverbs say, *Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise . . . Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things.* (Pro.

20:1, 23:29-33) ii. It also shows the foolishness of those who claim God's desire is to make people "drunk in the spirit" through the work of a "Holy Ghost Bartender." When Eph. 5:18 says, *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is*

dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, it contrasts the work of the Spirit with the effects of drunkenness.

iii. Alcohol is a depressant. It "loosens"

people because it depresses their self-control, their wisdom, their balance and judgment. The filling of the Holy Spirit has an exactly opposite effect. He is a stimulant, and He influences every aspect of our being to better and more perfect performance.

b. **And became uncovered in his tent:** It may be Noah was abused sexually by one of his sons or relatives. The phrase **became uncovered** and the idea of **nakedness** are sometimes associated with sexual relations (Lev. 18:6-20).

i. This is repulsive, but not terribly surprising. Many people who get drunk become victims of abuse, sexual and otherwise. 75% of the men and 55% of the women involved in date-rape situations were drinking or taking drugs just before the attack. The FBI says 50% of all rapes involve alcohol.

ii. There are more costs to drunkenness. In the United States 100,000 people die each year in alcohol-related deaths, while alcohol abuse costs the nation hundreds of billions of dollars each year. Still, the average American television viewer sees 90,000

incidents of drinking on television by age 21

and 100,000 beer commercials by age 18.

c. **Saw the nakedness of his father:** Others think Ham's only sin here was in seeing Noah's drunken, uncovered state, and that he made fun of him, mocking him as a father and as a man of God.

i. Literally, the ancient Hebrew says that Ham "told with delight" what he saw in his father's tent. He determined to mock his father and undermine his authority as a man of God.

3. (24-27) Noah's curse upon Canaan.

So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; a

servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." And he said: "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and may he dwell in the tents of Shem; and may Canaan be his servant."

a. **Knew what his younger son had done to him:** This seems to indicate that whatever happened to Noah, it was more than one of his sons or grandsons seeing his nudity. This explains the strength of the curse.

b. **Cursed be Canaan:** It seems strange that if Ham sinned against Noah, that **Canaan** (Ham's son) is cursed. Perhaps Canaan was also involved in this sin against Noah in a way not mentioned in the text. Perhaps the strongest punishment against Ham was for Noah to reveal prophetically the destiny of his son Canaan.

i. We can trust God is not punishing the son (Canaan) for the sin of the father (Ham).

This goes against the heart and justice of God (Eze. 18:2-3). However, through Noah's prophecy, God tells Ham what *will happen* to his son.

c. **May Canaan be his servant:** In earlier generations, prejudiced people regarded the descendants of Canaan as black people from Africa, and they used the curse on Canaan to justify slavery. But black people did not come from Canaan. Canaan was the father of the near-eastern peoples, most of who were conquered by Joshua when Israel took the Promised Land.

4. (28-29) The end of Noah's days.

And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

a. **Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years:** Noah was a remarkable man who served God in his own generation. Yet his last years do not seem to match the glory of his first years.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Every living creature of the earth and

every bird of the sky will be terrified of you.¹ Everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea are under your authority.² **3** You may eat any moving thing that lives.¹ As I gave you² the green plants, I now give³ you everything.

4 But you must not eat meat with its life (that is, its blood) in it.^{note} **5** For your lifeblood I will surely exact punishment, from every living creature I will exact punishment. From each person I will exact punishment for the life of the individual since the man was his relative.

6 “Whoever sheds human blood, by other humans must his blood be shed; for in God’s image God has made humankind.”

7 But as for you, be fruitful and multiply; increase abundantly on the earth and multiply on it.”

8 God said to Noah and his sons, **9** “Look! I now confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you **10**

and with every living creature that is with you, including the birds, the domestic animals, and every living creature of the earth with you, all those that came out of the ark with you – every living creature of the earth. **11** I confirm my covenant with you: Never again will all living things be wiped out by the waters of a flood; never again will a flood destroy the earth.”

12 And God said, “This is the guarantee of the covenant I am making with you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all subsequent generations: **13** I will place my rainbow in the clouds, and it will become a guarantee of the covenant between me and the earth. **14** Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, **15** then I will remember my covenant with you and with all living creatures of all kinds. Never again will the waters become a flood and destroy all living things. **16**

When the rainbow is in the clouds, I will notice it and remember the perpetual covenant between God and all living creatures of all kinds that are on the earth.”

17 So God said to Noah, “This is the guarantee of the covenant that I am confirming between me and all living things that are on the earth.”

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Now Ham was the father of Canaan.) **19** These were the sons of Noah, and from them the whole earth was populated.

20 Noah, a man of the soil, began to plant a vineyard.

21 When he drank some of the wine, he got drunk and uncovered himself inside his tent. **22** Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father’s nakedness and told his two brothers who were outside. **23** Shem and Japheth took the garment and placed it on their shoulders. Then they walked in backwards and covered up their father’s nakedness. Their faces were turned the other way so they did not see their father’s nakedness.

24 When Noah awoke from his drunken stupor he learned what his youngest son had done to him. **25** So he said, “Cursed be Canaan!

The lowest of slaves he will be to his brothers.”

26 He also said, “Worthy of praise is the LORD, the God of Shem!

May Canaan be the slave of Shem!

27 May God enlarge Japheth’s territory and numbers!

May he live in the tents of Shem and may Canaan be his slave!”

28 After the flood Noah lived 350 years. **29** The entire lifetime of Noah was 950 years, and then he died.

1 This is the account¹ of Noah’s sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons² were born³ to them after the flood.

Guzik - Genesis 10:1-32

Genesis 10 - The Table of Nations

The tenth chapter of Genesis . . . stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework . . . The

Table of Nations remains an astonishing accurate document.
(William F. Albright, cited in Boice) A. The descendants of Japheth.

1. (1) The three sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Now this is the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And sons were born to them after the flood.

2. (2) The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

a. **The sons of Japheth:** He was the father of the Indo-European peoples, those stretching from India to the shores of Western Europe.

They are each linked by linguistic similarities that often seem invisible to the layman but are much more obvious to the linguist.

b. **Gomer:** From this son of Japheth came the Germanic peoples, from whom came most of the original peoples of Western Europe. These include the original French, Spanish, and Celtic settlers.

c. **Magog . . . Tubal, Meshech:** These settled in the far north of Europe and became the Russian peoples.

d. **Madai:** From this son of Japheth came the ancient Medes and they populated what are now Iran and Iraq. The peoples of India also came from this branch of Japheth's family.

e. **Javan:** From this son of Japheth came the ancient Greeks, whose sea-faring ways are described in Gen. 10:5.

3. (3) The sons of Gomer.

The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

a. **Ashkenaz:** From this son of Gomer came the peoples who settled north of Judea into what we call the Fertile Crescent.

b. **Togarmah:** From this son of Gomer came the Armenians.

4. (4-5) The sons of Javan (the ancient Greeks).

The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From these the coastland peoples of the Gentiles

were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

a. **The sons of Javan were:** Geographic names that spring from these names in this chapter abound. Linguists have no trouble seeing the connection between **Kittim** and Cyprus, **Rodanim** and Rhodes, **Gomer** and Germany, **Meschech** and Moscow, **Tubal** and Tobolsk.

B. The descendants of Ham.

1. (6) The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

a. **Ham:** The descendants of Ham are the peoples who populated Africa and the Far East.

b. **Cush:** Apparently, this family divided into two branches early. Some founded Babylon (notably, **Nimrod**) and others founded Ethiopia.

c. **Mizraim:** This is another way the Bible refers to Egypt. **Put** refers to Libya, the region of North Africa west of Egypt. **Canaan** refers to the peoples who originally settled the land we today think of as Israel and its surrounding regions.

2. (7-12) The sons of Cush.

The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan. Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that is the principal city).

a. **Cush begot Nimrod:** One son of Cush worthy of note is **Nimrod**. He was a **mighty one on the earth**, but not in a good way. He ruled over **Babel**, which was the first organized rebellion of humans against God. The name **Nimrod** itself means, "let us rebel."

b. **Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD:** The context shows that this is not a compliment of Nimrod.

The idea is that Nimrod was an *offense* before the face of God.

i. "This is not talking about Nimrod's ability to hunt wild game. He was not a hunter of animals. He was a hunter of men - a warrior.

It was through his ability to fight and kill and rule ruthlessly that his kingdom of the Euphrates valley city states was consolidated." (Boice) ii. A Jerusalem Targum says: "He was powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, 'Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!' Therefore it is said: 'As Nimrod the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.'

"

iii. Ginzberg quotes from a Jewish legend: "The great success that attended all of Nimrod's undertakings produced a sinister effect. Men no longer trusted in God, but rather in their own prowess and ability, an attitude to which Nimrod tried to convert the whole world."

iv. "Hence it is likely that Nimrod, having acquired power, used it in tyranny and oppression; and by rapine and violence founded the domination which was the first distinguished by the name of a *kingdom* on the face of the earth. How many kingdoms have been founded in the same way, in various ages and nations from that time to the present! From the Nimrods of the earth, God deliver the world!" (Clarke) 3. (13-14) The sons of Mizraim.

Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, Pathrusim, and Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

4. (15-19) The sons of Canaan.

Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Gergashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And

the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

a. **Canaan begot Sidon:** The family of **Sidon**, the son of Canaan, went north and is related to the Hittites and Lebanese.

b. **And the Sinite:** Many people believe the Oriental peoples descended from the **Sinites**.

5. (20) The spread of the descendants of Ham.

These were the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands and in their nations.

C. The descendants of Shem.

1. (21-22) The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

And children were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder. The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

a. **Children were born also to Shem:** From Shem comes **Elam**, who was an ancestor to the Persian peoples; **Asshur**, who was the father of the Assyrians; **Lud** was father to the Lydians who lived for a time in Asia Minor; and **Aram** was father to the Arameans, who we also know as the Syrians. **Arphaxad** was the ancestor to Abram and the Hebrews.

2. (23) The sons of Aram.

The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

a. **Uz:** Later, a region in Arabia was named after this son of Aram.

Job came from the land of Uz (Job. 1:1).

3. (24-30) The sons and descendants of Arphaxad.

Arphaxad begot Salah, and Salah begot Eber. To Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan. Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, Obal, Abimael, Sheba, Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling

place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east.

a. **All these were the sons of Joktan:** The names under the son of **Joktan** (son of Eber, son of Salah, son of Arphaxad) are all associated with various Arabic peoples.

b. **And Jobab:** The one named **Jobab** may be the one we know as *Job* in the Old Testament.

4. (31) The spread of the descendants of Shem.

These were the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.

5. (32) Summary statement: the nations after the flood.

These were the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

a. "Hence one must consider this chapter of Genesis a mirror in which to discern that we human beings are, namely, creatures so marred by sin that we have no knowledge of our own origin, not even of God Himself, our Creator, unless the Word of God reveals these sparks of divine light to us from afar . . . This knowledge the Holy Scriptures reveal to us. Those who are without them live in error, uncertainty, and boundless ungodliness; for they have no knowledge about who they are and whence they came." (Luther, cited in Boice) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond

personal use without permission **2** The sons of Japheth¹ were Gomer,² Magog,³ Madai,⁴

Javan,⁵ Tubal,⁶ Meshech,⁷ and Tiras.⁸ **3** The sons of Gomer

were¹ Askenaz,² Riphath,³ and Togarmah.⁴ **4** The sons of

Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittim, and the

Dodanim.^{note} **5** From these the coastlands of the nations

were separated into their lands, every one according to its language, according to their families, by their nations.

6 The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. **7**

The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush was the father of Nimrod; he began to be a valiant warrior on the earth. **9** He was a mighty hunter before the LORD. (That is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD.") **10** The primary regions of his kingdom were Babel, Erech, Akkad, and Calneh in the land of Shinar. **11** From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, **12** and Resen, which is between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

13 Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, **14** Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came), and Caphtorites.

15 Canaan was the father of Sidon his firstborn, Heth, **16** the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, **17** Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, **18** Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

Eventually the families of the Canaanites were scattered **19** and the borders of Canaan extended from Sidon all the way to Gerar as far as Gaza, and all the way to Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. **20** These are the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and by their nations.

21 And sons were also born to Shem (the older brother of Japheth), the father of all the sons of Eber.

22 The sons of Shem were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram. **23** The sons of Aram were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

24 Arphaxad was the father of Shelah, and Shelah was the father of Eber. **25** Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg because in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. **26** Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, **27**

Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, **28** Obal, Abimael, Sheba, **29** Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were sons of Joktan. **30**

Their dwelling place was from Mesha all the way to Sephar in the eastern hills. **31** These are the sons of Shem according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, and according to their nations.

32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations, and from these the nations spread over the earth after the flood.

1 The whole earth¹ had a common language and a common vocabulary.²

Guzik - Genesis 11:1-32

Genesis 11 - Mankind after the Flood; the Tower

of Babel

A. The tower of Babel.

1. (1-4) A tower in the land of **Shinar**.

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

a. **The land of Shinar: Shinar** was a term used also of Babylon (Gen. 10:10). The multiplied descendants from the ark came together to build a great city and tower, in rebellion against God's command to spread out over the earth (Gen. 9:1).

b. **"Let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly" . . . they had asphalt for mortar:** Using baked bricks and asphalt for mortar, men built a tower that was both strong and waterproof, even as Noah used the same material in waterproofing the ark (Gen. 6:14).

Later Moses' mother used the same material in waterproofing Moses' basket (Exo. 2:3).

i. "Archaeology has revealed that this type of kiln-fired brick and asphalt construction was common in ancient Babylon." (Morris) c. **Come, let us build ourselves a city:** The *heart* and the *materials* relevant to the tower of Babel show that it was not only disobedient to God's command to *fill the earth* (Gen. 9:1), but it also shows man did not believe God's promise to never again flood the earth. A waterproof tower was made to "protect" man against a future deluge.

i. This was a strong statement of *self* against *God*. When they said **let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens**, they meant it.

d. **A tower whose top is in the heavens**: The top of the tower was intended to be **in the heavens**. It is doubtful they thought they could build a tower *to* heaven. It is more likely they built the tower as an observation point of the heavens; it was built "unto the heavens." Most astrological and occult practices have a history back to Babel.

i. If they really wanted to build a tower to reach heaven, it is unlikely they would start on the plain of Shinar, which is about Sea Level. Common sense says they would start on one of the nearby mountains.

ii. This **tower** was real. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus said the tower of Babel still stood in his day and he had seen it.

2. (5-9) God scatters them over the whole earth.

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD

scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

a. **The LORD came down to see the city and the tower**: The personal character of the language indicates this perhaps was a time when God came down in the form of a man, in the Person of Jesus Christ.

b. **Let Us go down**: This is another subtle reference to the Trinity.

c. **Nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them:** The potential of fallen man is terrible and powerful. When we think of the horrific accomplishments for evil of men in the 20th century, the great ability of men and nations is a painful consideration.

d. **So the LORD scattered them abroad:** The forced separation of men from Babel was more God's mercy than His judgment. God, in dividing man both linguistically and geographically, put a check on the power of his fallen nature.

e. **The LORD confused the language of all the earth:** The division of the languages is a fascinating subject. Modern linguists know man did not invent language, any more than man invented his own circulatory or nervous system.

Most modern linguists believe language is so unique that the only way they can explain it apart from God is to say that it was part of a *unique* evolutionary process.

i. Language can not be the product of man putting together sounds all by himself. For example, there are many universal human sounds (like the "raspberry" sound) that are not part of any human language. If man invented language on his own, it would make sense for some language to use that sound.

ii. Language is so complex because languages exist as whole systems, not as small parts put together. Most modern linguists believe all languages come from one original language.

f. **From there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth:** Think what it was like for a family to leave the area of Babel and go out on their own. They must look for a suitable place to live, and once they found it, they must exist by hunting and gathering, living in crude dwellings or caves until they could support themselves by agriculture and taking advantage of the natural resources.

Families would multiply rapidly, develop their own culture, and their own distinctive biological and physical characteristics influenced by their environment. In the small population, genetic characteristics change very quickly, and as the population of the group grew bigger, the changes stabilized and became more or less permanent.

i. The whole account of what happened at Babel with its anti-God dictator, its organized rebellion against God, and its direct distrust of God's promise shows man hasn't gotten any better since the flood. Time, progress, government, and organization have made man *better off*, but not *better*.

ii. Now God will begin to make man *better*, and He will start as He always starts: with a man who will do His will, even if he does not do His will perfectly.

B. The line of Adam through Shem to Abram.

1. (10-25) From Shem to Terah, the father of Abram.

This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah.

After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

2. (26-28) The family of Terah in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Haran begot Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans.

a. **Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram:**

Gen. 11:26 is the first mention of **Abram**. Abram (later changed to "Abraham") is mentioned 312 times in 272 verses in the Bible. He is arguably the most famous man of the Old Testament, and certainly one of the most influential men of history.

i. The Book of Genesis covers more than 2,000 years and more than 20 generations.

Yet, it spends almost a third of its text on the life of one man - Abram.

b. **Terah begot Abram:** Abram is unique in the way he is called *the friend of God* (Jam.

2:23); *Abraham, Your friend forever* (2Ch.

20:7); *Abraham, My friend* (Isa. 41:8).

i. We all know the value of having friends in high places. Abram had a Friend in the highest place! Once Abraham Lincoln received a request for pardon from a man who deserted the army. When he was told the man had no friends, Lincoln said "I will be his friend," and he pardoned him.

ii. Men and women in the Bible are famous for many different things, but Abram is great for his *faith*. Moses was the great lawgiver; Joshua a great general; David a great king, and Elijah a great prophet. Most of us know we can never be great in those things, but we can be great people of faith. We can be friends of God.

iii. If you despair in knowing you do not have Abram's faith, take comfort in knowing you have Abram's God. He can

build in you the faith of Abram, because He built it in Abram himself.

iv. You do have faith. You buy a ticket to a sporting event and show up, having faith the ticket is good. You fly in an airplane because you have faith in the airline's equipment, mechanics, and pilots. You plan a weekend based on the weather report. And you do this even though sometimes there are ticket scandals, sometimes planes crash, and sometimes the weatherman is wrong; but you still have faith. God can build the faith you have.

3. (29-30) The family of Abram and his brother Nahor.

Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

a. **Then Abram and Nahor took wives:** Abram's wife **Sari** (her name means "contentious") was barren, unable to bear children.

b. **Abram's wife was Sarai . . . she had no child:** Because the name "Abram" means "Father," it must have constantly amazed those meeting Abram to discover he had no children.

But his present lack of children will play an important role in God's plan of redemption.

4. (31-32) The family of Terah and their travels from Ur of the Chaldeans to Haran.

And Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

a. **They went out with them from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan:** So Abram's story begins in Ur of the Chaldeans (Babylon). Jos. 24:2 describes Abram before the LORD called him. He was from a family of idol

worshippers and was probably an idol worshipper himself (notwithstanding Jewish legends).

i. Abram came from a family of idol worshippers. Later, when Abram's grandson Jacob went back to Abram's relatives, they were still worshipping idols.

b. **And they came to Haran and dwelt there:** Act. 7:2-4 makes it clear the call of Gen.

12:1-3 came to Abram while he still lived in Ur of the Chaldeans. When he received this call from God he was only partially obedient, because he took his father Terah with him to Haran even though the LORD called him to go from Ur by himself.

c. **Terah died in Haran:** Sometimes we can gain meaning from names in the Bible. The name **Terah** means, "delay." The name **Haran** means "parched, barren." When Abram was in partial obedience, then delay and barrenness characterized his life. When we delay in drawing close to God we also experience barrenness.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When the people¹ moved eastward,² they found a plain in Shinar³ and settled there. **3** Then they said to one another,¹ "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly."² (They had brick instead of stone and tar³

instead of mortar.)⁴ **4** Then they said, "Come, let's build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens so that we may make a name for ourselves. Otherwise we will be scattered across the face of the entire earth." **5** But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the people had started building. **6** And the LORD said, "If as one people all sharing a common language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be beyond them. **7** Come, let's go down and confuse their language so they won't be able to understand each other."

8 So the LORD scattered them from there across the face of the entire earth, and they stopped building the city.

9 That is why its name was called Babel – because there the LORD confused the language of the entire world, and from there the LORD scattered them across the face of the entire earth.

10 This is the account of Shem.

Shem was 100 old when he became the father of Arphaxad, two years after the flood. **11** And after becoming the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

12 When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. **13** And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

14 When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. **15** And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

16 When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. **17** And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. **19** And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

20 When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. **21** And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

22 When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. **23** And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. **25** And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

26 When Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 This is the account of Terah.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. **28** Haran died in the land of

his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans, while his father Terah was still alive. **29** And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. **30** But Sarai was barren; she had no children.

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (the son of Haran), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and with them he set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. When they came to Haran, they settled there. **32** The lifetime of Terah was 205 years, and he died in Haran.

1 Now the LORD said¹ to Abram,²

"Go out³ from your country, your relatives, and your father's household to the land that I will show you.⁴

Guzik - Genesis 12:1-20

Genesis 12 - God's Call of Abram; Abram in

Egypt

A. God's promise to Abram.

1. (1-3) God's previous covenant with Abram.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

a. **Now the LORD had said to Abram:** We know from Act. 7:2-4 that this promise was made to Abram *before* he left Ur of the Chaldeans. Now that his father was dead and he was compelled to a more complete obedience, God repeated the promise.

i. Abram's partial obedience did not take God's promise away. Instead, it meant the promise was on "hold" until Abram was ready to do what the LORD said.

ii. Abram will certainly become a giant of faith, even being the father of the believing (Gal. 3:7); yet he did not start there. We will see Abram as an example of growing in faith and obedience.

b. **To a land I that I will show you:** After stating He wanted Abram to leave his country and his relatives, God promised Abram a **land**.

Specifically, God promised the land of greater Israel.

i. These are *God's* promises; notice how often God says **I will** in these verses.

Genesis chapter 11 is all about the plans of man. Genesis chapter 12 is all about the plans of God.

c. **I will make you a great nation:** God promised to make a **nation** from Abram. He will have enough children and grandchildren and further descendants to populate a nation.

d. **And make your name great:** God promised to bless Abram and to **make** [his]

name great. There is probably no more honored name in history than the name of Abram, who is honored by Jews, Muslims, and Christians.

e. **I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you:** God also promised He would **bless those who bless you** and to **curse him who curses you.**

This remains true today and is a root reason for the decline and death of many empires.

i. "When the Greeks overran Palestine and desecrated the altar in the Jewish temple, they were soon conquered by Rome. When Rome killed Paul and many others, and destroyed Jerusalem under Titus, Rome soon fell. Spain was reduced to a fifth-rate nation after the Inquisition against the Jews; Poland fell after the pogroms; Hitler's Germany went down after its orgies of anti-Semitism; Britain lost her empire when she broke her faith with Israel." (Barnhouse) ii. This is also one reason why the United States has been so blessed. The United States was one of the first modern nations to grant full citizenship and protection to Jewish people.

iii. This promise has also affected the church. The times when the church took upon itself the persecution of the Jewish people were dark times not only for the Jews, but also for the church.

f. **In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed:** Not only was Abram promised blessing, but God also promised to *make him* a blessing, even to the point where **all the families of the earth** would be blessed in Abram.

i. *And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.* (Gal. 3:8-9) ii. *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For*

You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation (Rev. 5:9). The work of Jesus will touch every people group on the earth.

iii. Luther said the promise **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed** should be written "in golden letters and should be extolled in the languages of all people," for "who else . . . has dispensed this blessing among all nations except the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ?" (Boice) 2. (4) Abram's departure from Haran.

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

a. **And Lot went with him:** This is partial obedience by Abram. God commanded him to go out *from his kindred*, and he brought his nephew Lot.

b. **Lot went with him:** Lot will not be a blessing to Abram. He will be nothing but trouble and inconvenience.

3. (5-6) Abram's arrival in Canaan.

Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

4. (7-9) God appears to Abram in Canaan.

Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South.

a. **Then the LORD appeared to Abram:** Once Abram was in the land, God reminded him of His promise. The land

Abram saw belonged to Abram and his descendants.

b. **To your descendants I will give this land:** Abram never owned any of this land except his burial plot (Gen. 23:14-20). Yet God's promise was enough evidence to assure Abram that he did indeed own the whole country.

c. **And there he built an altar to the LORD:** Abram thought this was important to do. The altar was important to Abram because it was a place to meet with God, to offer sacrifice for sin, to show submission to God, and to worship God.

i. Christians have an altar also (Heb. 13:10).

We meet with God at our own place where we remember the sacrifice Jesus made for sin (Eph. 5:2), where we submit to God as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1), and where we offer the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15).

d. **He pitched his tent:** Even in the land God gave him, Abram never lived in a house - he lived in a tent. Tents are the home of those who are just passing through and do not put down permanent roots.

i. We too are to live like tent-dwellers, as pilgrims on this earth (1Pe. 2:11). We should live as people who have their permanent dwelling place in heaven, not on earth. Too many Christians want to build mansions on earth and think they would be happy with tents in heaven.

ii. A pilgrim is someone who leaves home and travels to a specific destination. A pilgrim isn't a drifter; a pilgrim has a goal.

Abram's goal (and our goal) was God's heavenly city (Heb. 11:8-10, 14-16).

B. Abram in Egypt.

1. (10) Abram's faith is tested by famine.

Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

a. **There was a famine in the land:** Abram was not wrong for being concerned about famine and feeding his family,

but Abram was wrong in thinking God would not provide for his needs in the place where God called him to live.

After all, God called Abram to Canaan, not to Egypt.

i. Abram, like most of us, found it easier to trust God in the far-off promises than in the right-now needs.

b. **Abraham went down to Egypt:** When we are tested in this way, we often believe our actions are all right because no harm can come.

Though God blessed and protected Abram even in Egypt, he came away with excess baggage and a rebuke from a pagan king. Harm came.

i. The harm especially shows up later when a slave girl named Hagar - whom Sarai received when in Egypt - is a source of great trouble to this family.

2. (11-13) Sensing potential danger in Egypt, Abram persuades Sarai to lie on his behalf.

And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."

a. **I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance:** We are first struck at Abram's concern over his 60-year-old wife's attractiveness to the Egyptians. This shows Sarai was not only a woman of particular beauty, but also that not every culture worships youthful appearance the way modern culture does.

i. The long life span of Abram and Sarai also explains her beauty. Since Abram lived to be 175 and Sarai to be 127, this was only middle age for her, perhaps corresponding to what we think of as her thirties.

ii. A Jewish legend says when Abram went into Egypt, he tried to hide Sarai in a casket.

When Egyptian customs officials asked what he had in the casket, he said, "barley." "No," they said, "it contains wheat." "Very well," answered Abram. "I'll pay the custom on wheat." Then the officers said it contained pepper. Abram said he would pay the custom charges on pepper. Then the officers said it contained gold. Abram said he would pay the custom charges on gold. Then the officers said it contained precious stones.

Abram said he would pay the custom charges on precious stones. By this time, the officers insisted on opening the casket.

When they did, all of Egypt shined with the beauty of Sarai. These same legends say that in comparison to Sarai, all other women looked like monkeys. She was even more beautiful than Eve.

b. **Please say you are my sister:** This was in fact a half-truth. Sarai was Abram's half sister (Gen. 20:12). Yet a half-truth is a whole lie.

Abram's intent here was clearly to deceive, and he trusted in his deception to protect him instead of trusting in the LORD.

i. If you want to do something wrong, you can find some good reasons to do it. If you can't think of the reasons yourself, the devil is happy to suggest them.

ii. Ideally Abram would say, "God promised me children, and I don't have them yet; therefore, I know I am indestructible until God's promise is fulfilled, because God's promises are always true."

3. (14-15) Sarai is taken into Pharaoh's house.

So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house.

a. **The woman was taken into Pharaoh's house:** Understanding the place Abram and Sarai have in God's redemptive plan, we realize how serious this is. God did not

want Sari's womb to be defiled by a gentile king, because the Messiah will come from her line of descendants.

4. (16-20) Abram leaves Egypt after being rebuked by a heathen king.

He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

a. **He treated Abram well for her sake:** God blessed Abram even when he didn't do what he should. God continued to protect Abram, even when Abram acted like a liar. God did not call back His promise to Abram because the promise depended on God, not on Abram.

b. **What is this you have done to me?** Sadly, a pagan king had to rebuke Abram. The king shows Abram if he trusted in God and told the truth, everything would have been all right.

i. But God is in the business of growing Abram into a man of great faith, and this requires circumstances where Abram must trust God. "Faith is not a mushroom that grows overnight in damp soil; it is an oak tree that grows for a thousand years under the blast of the wind and rain."

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2 Then I will make you¹ into a great nation, and I will bless you,²

and I will make your name great,³

so that you will exemplify divine blessing.⁴

3 I will bless those who bless you,¹

but the one who treats you lightly² I must curse, and all the families of the earth will bless one another³ by your name."

4 So Abram left, just as the LORD had told him to do, and Lot went with him. (Now Abram was 75 years old when he departed from Haran.)note **5** And Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they left for the land of Canaan. They entered the land of Canaan.

6 Abram traveled through the land as far as the oak tree of Moreh at Shechem. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) **7** The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So Abram built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

8 Then he moved from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the LORD and worshiped the LORD. **9** Abram continually journeyed by stages down to the Negev.

10 There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to stay for a while because the famine was severe. **11** As he approached Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "Look, I know that you are a beautiful woman. **12**

When the Egyptians see you they will say, 'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will keep you alive. **13** So tell them you are my sister so that it may go well for me because of you and my life will be spared on account of you."

14 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. **15** When Pharaoh's officials saw her, they praised her to Pharaoh. So Abram's wife was taken into the household of Pharaoh, **16** and he did treat Abram well on account of her. Abram received sheep and cattle, male donkeys, male servants, female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe diseases because of Sarai, Abram's wife. **18** So Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife?

19 Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her to be my wife? Here is your wife! Take her and go!” **20** Pharaoh gave his men orders about Abram, and so they expelled him, along with his wife and all his possessions.

1 So Abram went up from Egypt into the Negev.¹ He took his wife and all his possessions with him, as well as Lot.²

Guzik - Genesis 13:1-18

Genesis 13 - God Promises Abram the Land

Again

A. Abram and Lot separate.

1. (1-4) Abram returns to the land promised to him.

Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the South. Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

a. **To the place where his tent had been at the beginning:** Even though Abram came back from Egypt with great riches, he returned to the same **place** as before. He was right back where he started. Essentially, Abram's time in Egypt was *wasted* time. God could have and would have provided for his needs in Canaan.

i. Abram should not have used the blessing God brought to him in Egypt as a justification for going there. Even though God is great enough to bring good even when we disobey, there is still a cost to pay.

ii. Abram's unbelief took him from his place of worship; it led him into sin, and caused him to lead others into sin. It made him more confident in his ability to lie than in the protecting power of God. It even broke apart his family for a while. Finally, even an ungodly king rightly rebuked him.

b. **To the place of the altar which he had made there at first:** Yet, Abram also did what he should. Instead of torturing himself about his past sin, he got busy doing what he needed to do: living with the tent as a pilgrim and the altar as a worshipper, and calling on the name of the LORD.

i. The church has always had the challenge of what to do with believers who slip into sin and want to come back into the church. For example, in the third century, the heroes of

the faith were the martyrs and the confessors, but there were also many "lapsed" believers who buckled under the threat of persecution. Some churches were too lax, admitting them back as if nothing happened. Some were too harsh, saying they could never come back to the church and be used of God. Most churches did the right thing: they allowed the lapsed back, but basically as beginners again, not pretending as if nothing happened.

ii. Here, Abram came back into the Promised Land basically as a beginner. He came back to Bethel, back with the tent and the altar, back doing what he should.

iii. God wants us to walk in our *first* love and our *first* works (Rev. 2:4-5).

2. (5-7) Contention between Abram's and Lot's hired workers.

Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

a. **Lot also, who went with Abram:** God commanded Abram to leave his family behind when he came to the land of Canaan (Gen.

12:1), but Abram brought his nephew Lot along with him. Trouble like this was the result.

i. This conflict came now, when Abram did the right thing. When we get right with God, we can often expect attack from the devil.

b. **There was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock:** Something had to be done about this strife between the estates of Abram and Lot, because they could not continue a conflict like this before the unbelieving inhabitants of Canaan.

i. When the **Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land**, and saw the men of Abram and Lot fighting, they must have thought, "Oh, they're just like us.

They say they worship another God, a God they say is the true God, but I see they are really just like us."

ii. "Many people will never listen to what any believer says because of what some believers are." (Barnhouse) c. **Their possessions were so great**: This is the first mention of

wealth in the Bible. There was a great difference between the riches of Abram and the riches of Lot. They both had great wealth, but Lot's wealth possessed him.

Abram had great possessions, but they did not possess him.

3. (8-9) Abram's generous offer to Lot.

So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before you?

Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left."

a. **Is not the whole land before you?** Since Abram was the eldest, and gave all the land to Abram (not to Lot), it was pure generosity on Abram's part that caused him to make this offer to Lot.

b. **If you take the left, then I will go to the right**: Abram was able to fight when the occasion demanded it. He did not yield to Lot out of weakness, but out of love and trust in God. A few acres of grazing land didn't seem worth fighting for to a man with an eternal perspective.

i. God was glorified when Paul, out of love, waived his right to be supported by the gospel (1Co. 9:14-18). God was glorified when Jesus, out of love, waived his right to an existence which knew no human suffering or trial by experience (Phi. 2:5-11).

ii. Abram fulfilled the New Testament principle of love: *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* (Phi. 2:4) c. **If you go to the right, then I will go to the left**: Right or left, Abram knew

he could trust God. He did it because he learned God would provide for his needs, and he did not have to worry about being too generous. Abram knew whatever Lot chose God would make sure Abram came out all right.

i. In Egypt, Abram thought he had to take his fate into his own hands. He had to look out for "number one." Now, he is wiser and is willing to let God look out for his interests.

Right or left, it didn't matter to Abram, because God would be there.

ii. Because he trusted in God, Abram did not

have to be obsessed with his own "rights" and neither do we. The only *right* we truly have is the right to go to hell. Everything else is the free gift of God and has nothing to do with our "rights."

4. (10-13) Lot chooses his portion of land.

And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.

a. **Like the garden of the LORD:** Lot made his choice purely based on what he could see with his eyes. He cares only for the material abundance of the land, and cares nothing for how it will impact him and his family spiritually.

i. As much as anything, faith means we do not walk by what we see, but by what we know to be true in God: *For we walk by faith, not by sight* (2Co. 5:7). Abram was walking by faith; Lot was walking only by sight.

b. Pitched his tent even as far as Sodom: It is only this far for now, but later Lot will become a leader of this sinful city. Valuing only the things that can be seen will increase his wealth temporarily, but Lot will lose it all.

i. Of course Lot thought, "I can serve God as well there as here. They probably need a witness." But he was deceiving himself.

Beware of our ability to deceive ourselves!

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? (Jer.

17:9)

ii. "In the end, he who sought this world lost it, and he who was willing to give up anything for the honour of God found it." (Maclaren)

iii. It wasn't Lot's choice that led his heart astray. His heart was already astray, and it was demonstrated by his choice.

B. God confirms His promise to Abram.

1. (14-15) God promises the land to Abram and to his descendants forever.

And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward; for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever."

a. After Lot had separated from him: God wanted to talk to Abram alone after Lot had left.

This was a promise made to Abram, not to Abram's nephew.

i. This promise of the land had been made to Abram when he lived in Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 12:1-3, Act. 7:2-4). God is now repeating this promise.

b. All the land which you see I give to you: God also wanted to remind Abram that even though Abram had been generous enough to "give" some of the land to Lot, God still said the land belonged to Abram.

2. (16) God reminds Abram of His promise to give Abram many descendants.

"And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered."

a. **I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth:** This was quite a promise to make to a childless man in his 70's or 80's, but Abram knew to walk by faith and not by sight.

b. **Your descendants:** Again, this promise of many descendants was made to Abram when he lived in Ur of the Chaldeans (Gen. 12:1-3, Act.

7:2-4). To assure Abram, God repeats the promise.

3. (17-18) Abram walks through the land God gave to him.

"Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.

a. **Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you:** As a token of Abram's reception of the land by faith, God wants Abram to *explore* the land of promise, to walk through it as if it were his, though he does not have "title deed" to it yet.

i. In the same way, God wants us to *explore* our "land of promise," His Word, where God has *given to us exceedingly great and precious promises* (2Pe. 1:4), where He has given us *all things that pertain to life and godliness* (2Pe. 1:3). He wants us to walk through this "land," possessing it by faith.

b. **Dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron:** The name **Mamre** means, "vision."; **Hebron** means "communion."

Abram is once again walking in the LORD's vision for him and in communion with the LORD.

c. **And built an altar there to the LORD:** Abram built another **altar**. He lived life in constant awareness of the need for a sacrificial atonement and covering.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** (Now Abram was very wealthy¹ in

livestock, silver, and gold.)²

3 And he journeyed from place to place¹ from the Negev as far as Bethel.² He returned³ to the place where he had pitched his tent⁴ at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai.

4 This was the place where he had first built the altar, and there Abram worshiped the LORD. **5** Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. **6**

But the land could not support them while they were living side by side. Because their possessions were so great, they were not able to live alongside one another. **7** So there were quarrels between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen.

(Now the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land at that time.) **8** Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no quarreling between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are close relatives. **9** Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself now from me. If you go to the left, then I'll go to the right, but if you go to the right, then I'll go to the left."

10 Lot looked up and saw the whole region of the Jordan. He noticed that all of it was well-watered (before the LORD obliterated Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, all the way to Zoar. **11** Lot chose for himself the whole region of the Jordan and traveled toward the east.

So the relatives separated from each other. **12** Abram settled in the land of Canaan, but Lot settled among the cities of the Jordan plain and pitched his tents next to Sodom. **13** (Now the people of Sodom were extremely wicked rebels against the LORD.) **14** After Lot had departed, the LORD said to Abram, "Look from the place where you stand to the north, south, east, and west. **15** I will give all the land that you see to you and your descendants forever. **16** And I will make your descendants like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone is able to count the dust of the earth, then your descendants also can be counted. **17** Get up and walk throughout the land, for I will give it to you."

18 So Abram moved his tents and went to live by the oaks of Mamre in Hebron, and he built an altar to the LORD there.

1 At that time¹ Amraphel king of Shinar,² Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations³

Guzik - Genesis 14:1-24

Genesis 14 - Abram Rescues Lot and Meets

Melchizedek

A. Abram rescues Lot from the confederacy of kings.

1. (1-10) The four kings of the cities in the region of Sodom and Gomorrah rebel against the confederation of five kings of nations ruling over them.

And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea). Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness. Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon Tamar. And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against five. Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the remainder fled to the mountains.

a. **Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him came and attacked:** Archaeologist Nelson Glueck documents the destruction left by these kings: "I found that every village in their path had been plundered and left in

ruins, and the countryside was laid waste. The population had been wiped out or led away into captivity.

For hundreds of years thereafter, the entire area was like an abandoned cemetery, hideously unkempt, with all its monuments shattered and strewn in pieces on the ground."

b. **Now the Valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits:**

The Hebrew here is a good example of how the language uses repetition to show emphasis. "The Hebrew way of saying *full of bitumen pits* is: *pits, pits of bitumen*.

Repetition expresses abundance, plenitude, etc." (Leupold)

2. (11-12) In the course of their attack, the five kings take Lot and all his possessions.

Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. They also took Lot, Abram's brother's son who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

a. **They also took Lot:** Now, the confederacy of five kings has involved Abram. Because Abram is a man of honor, he will fight for his nephew.

b. **And his goods:** Since Lot was living among the wicked people of Sodom, we are not surprised he is taken captive also. "Those believers who conform to the world must expect to suffer for it." (Spurgeon) 3. (13-14) Abram hears of Lot's captivity and marshals an army.

Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram.

Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

a. **Abraham the Hebrew:** This is the first use of **Hebrew** in the Bible. "The word Hebrew comes from a root that means *passed over*. The Septuagint translates it *the passenger*." (Barnhouse)

b. **He armed his three hundred and**

eighteen trained servants: We see the great wealth of Abram; any man who can assemble 318 servants capable of fighting must be very rich.

c. **Trained servants:** Abram was a man who walked in faith, yet he was also a prudent man.

Abram kept his own personal army, and he apparently kept them trained and ready to defend his interests.

d. **Went in pursuit as far as Dan:** Abram's army pursues the confederacy of five kings far a long distance to the north. The city of Dan is all the way up at the northern border of Israel.

4. (15-17) Abram leads his army to victory over the five kings.

He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. So he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him.

a. **He divided his forces against them by night:** Abram had military wisdom. Using the clever tactic of a night attack with his army split into two groups, he succeeds in rescuing Lot and recovering all the booty seized by the confederacy of the five kings.

b. **Also brought back his brother Lot and his goods:** Unfortunately, Lot will move right back to where he was in Sodom. He refuses this warning from God, and he will eventually lose everything when Sodom and Gomorrah are judged.

B. Abram and Melchizedek.

1. (18-20) Abram meets Melchizedek.

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High,

possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

a. **Then Melchizedek:** We have no idea of where Melchizedek came from, how he came to be in Canaan, how he came to be a worshipper and priest of the true God, and how Abram came to know about him. We only know he was there.

b. **Melchizedek king of Salem:** The name **Melchizedek** means "king of righteousness."

He is the **king of Salem**, and Salem is the original **Jeru salem**, and Melchizedek is **the priest of God Most High**. He is a worshipper and priest of the true God, ruling over Jerusalem even in those ancient times.

i. One thing making Melchizedek unique is he is both a king and a priest. History shows how dangerous it is to combine religious and civic authority. God forbade the kings of Israel to be priests and the priests to be kings (In 2Ch. 26:16-26, King Uzziah tried to do the work of priest, and God struck him with leprosy), but here is an exception.

ii. And Melchizedek is the **priest of God Most High**. *El Elyon* means "Highest God,"

like saying "Supreme Being." We should never settle for a "higher power"; we should serve the *Highest Power*.

c. **Brought out bread and wine:** Melchizedek served Abram **bread and wine**. Perhaps he even served them in a manner looking forward to our redeeming sacrifice, as the bread and wine of Passover and the Lord's table look at our redeeming sacrifice, Jesus Christ.

d. **He was the priest of God Most High:** Melchizedek, as priest, did two things. He **blessed** Abram and he **blessed** God.

Melchizedek shows a priest must connect with both God and man and has a ministry to both God and man.

i. Though Melchizedek seems like an obscure figure, he figures to be a very important Old Testament person. Psalms

110:4 says the priesthood of the Messiah is a priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, as opposed to being of the order of Aaron.

Hebrews chapters 5 through 7 makes a great deal of this idea.

ii. Heb. 7:3 describes Melchizedek as *without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually*. Because of this passage, some have thought Melchizedek is actually a pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus.

iii. Others have suggested he is Seth, Noah's son, or Job, or an angel; or even some have fancifully speculated Melchizedek is an outer-space visitor, an "unfallen Adam" from another planet, sent to observe the progress of God's work of redemption for this fallen race.

iv. "The question cannot be said to be settled completely . . . otherwise, the identity of Melchizedek would have been agreed on by Bible scholars long ago." (Morris) But we can, at the very least, say he was a remarkable type or picture of Jesus.

e. **And he gave him a tithe of all**: Abram gave unto the LORD, through Melchizedek, a **tithe of all**. This refers to one tenth of his *assets*, not his *income*.

i. It is almost as if Abram and Melchizedek worked to see who could bless the other more. Melchizedek blessed Abram out of his resources, and Abram blessed Melchizedek out of his resources. This is a great attitude for us to have in the body of Christ.

2. (21-24) Abram refuses the booty from the battle.

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you

should say, 'I have made Abram rich'; except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

a. **Take the goods for yourself:** As seemed proper, the king of Sodom wanted to reward Abram for all he did in recovering what was taken by the confederation of five kings, and he offered Abram a tremendous amount of booty.

b. **I will take nothing:** Yet, Abram will not take it - because of a vow he has made to **God Most High** - a phrase he uses after hearing Melchizedek use this particular title for God (Gen. 14:19).

c. **Lest you should say, "I have made Abram rich" :** Abram refused the spoil because he would let no man say a man had made Abram rich. Abram demanded all the credit go to God and God alone.

i. When we are willing to pursue human measures of success in the flesh through worldly, fleshly methods, how can we really say God has given success, if it should come? How much better to let God raise you up, so He gets the glory, and so you *know* it was His work.

d. **Let them take their portion:** However, at the same time, Abram does not impose his scruples on his Amorite allies (Gen. 14:13).

They are entitled to as much of the spoil as is appropriate.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** went to war¹ against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar).² **3** These last five kings¹ joined forces² in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).³ **4** For twelve years they had served Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.note **5**

In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings who were his allies came and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh

Kiriathaim, **6** and the Horites in their hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is near the desert. **7** Then they attacked En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh) again, and they conquered all the territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazazon Tamar.

8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and prepared for battle. In the Valley of Siddim they met **9** Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar. Four kings fought against five. **10** Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into them, but some survivors fled to the hills.

11 The four victorious kings took all the possessions and food of Sodom and Gomorrah and left. **12** They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions when they left, for Lot was living in Sodom.

13 A fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and Aner. (All these were allied by treaty with Abram.) **14** When Abram heard that his nephew had been taken captive, he mobilized his 318 trained men who had been born in his household, and he pursued the invaders as far as Dan. **15** Then, during the night, Abram divided his forces against them and defeated them. He chased them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.

16 He retrieved all the stolen property. He also brought back his nephew Lot and his possessions, as well as the women and the rest of the people.

17 After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the Valley of Shaveh (known as the King's Valley). **18** Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (Now he was the priest of the Most High God.) **19** He blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth.

20 Worthy of praise is the Most High God, who delivered your enemies into your hand.”

Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything.

21 Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the people and take the possessions for yourself.” **22** But Abram replied to the king of Sodom, “I raise my hand to the LORD, the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth, and vow **23** that I will take nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal. That way you can never say, ‘It is I who made Abram rich.’ **24** I will take nothing except compensation for what the young men have eaten. As for the share of the men who went with me – Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre – let them take their share.”

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram! I am your shield¹ and the one who will reward you in great abundance.”²

Guzik - Genesis 15:1-21

Genesis 15 - God Confirms the Covenant with

Abram

A. God speaks to Abram's fears and doubts with a promise.

1. (1) The word of the LORD comes to Abram in a vision.

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

a. **After these things the word of the LORD**

came to Abram: How does the **word of the LORD** come to us? In the Bible, it happened in many different ways: by a personal appearance of God, by an audible voice, by visions or dreams, by the ministry of angels, by the working of the Spirit of God upon the mind, by the making alive of a passage of Scripture to our hearts, or by the ministry of a prophet or preacher.

b. **Do not be afraid . . . I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward:** There was a good reason why God said this. Because Abram had just defeated a much larger army, from a confederation of five kings, he had reason to be afraid for his security. An attack of retribution was to be expected.

c. **Your shield . . . your reward:** Abram needed a **shield** because he was expecting to be attacked. He needed **reward** because he had just forfeited great reward offered from the king of Sodom.

i. God is telling Abram that though he has sacrificed for His sake, he will not be the loser for it. God will more than make up what Abram has given up for the LORD.

ii. God knows how to become the answer to our need. When we need a shield or a reward, He becomes those things for us.

d. **Do not be afraid:** So God told Abram this because he *was* afraid, and afraid for good reason. But God will give him

a *reason* to put away his fears. God never tells us **do not be afraid** without giving us a reason to put away our fears.

2. (2-3) Abram honestly expresses his doubts.

But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

a. **Lord GOD, what will You give me:** Though certainly Abram appreciated the promise from God, at the same time, there was a sense in which it seemed to ring hollow in Abram's ears. It was as if Abram said, "What good is it that You are my shield and reward?

The only thing I've ever wanted with any passion in my life is a son! Where are the descendants You promised me?"

i. It is almost as if Abram meant, "LORD, You've given me lots of stuff, and now promise to give me more, and to protect me.

But what good is it if I don't have a descendant to give it to? I want the son You promised me!"

ii. **Eliezer of Damascus** was Abram's chief assistant, his right-hand man. He was a good man, but not a son to Abram.

b. **Look, You have given me no offspring:** Abram's bold honesty before the LORD is worthy of our imitation. Instead of bottling up his feelings, he lays them out before the LORD.

c. **No offspring:** Did Abram's question mean he doubted God? Yes. But there is a difference between a doubt that *denies* God's promise and a doubt which *desires* God's promise. Abram *wants* to believe and is looking to God to strengthen his faith.

3. (4-5) God speaks to Abram's doubts with a promise.

And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if

you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

a. **This one shall not be your heir:** God reminds Abram of the promise originally recorded in Gen. 12:2 and 13:15-16. God does this because He knows how much we *need* to be reminded.

b. **One who will come from your own body shall be your heir:** God often states a promise with such certainty, we believe it will be fulfilled right away, but the fulfillment of *this* promise was still 15 years away.

i. No wonder the writer to the Hebrews says: *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.* (Heb. 6:11-12)

c. **From your own body:** God explained exactly what He meant in His promise to Abram.

He meant that it wasn't a spiritual descendant who would inherit the promise (such as Eliezer), but an actual flesh-and-blood descendant. This was necessary, because we sometimes *misunderstand* God's promises.

d. **Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them:** God not only *tells* Abram the promise again, but He *confirms* it with an illustration: the stars in the sky show how vast the number of Abram's descendants would be.

i. And one of those descendants would be the *Bright and Morning Star* (Rev. 22:16) .

4. (6) Abram's response of faith to God's promise.

And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

a. **And he believed in the LORD:** When Abram put his trust in God, specifically in God's promise to him (descendants who would also produce the Messiah), God credited this belief to Abram's account as righteousness.

i. There are essentially two types of righteousness: righteousness we *accomplish* by our own efforts, and righteousness *accounted* to us by the work of God when we believe.

ii. Since none of us can be good enough to accomplish perfect righteousness, we must have God's righteousness accounted to us by doing just what Abram did: **he believed in the LORD.**

iii. God's accounting is not pretending. God does not account to us a pretended righteousness, but a real one in Jesus Christ.

b. **And He accounted it to him for righteousness:** This is one of the clearest expressions in the Bible of the truth of salvation by grace, through faith. This is the first time *believe* is used in the Bible; this is the first time *righteousness* is used in the Bible. It is the gospel in the Old Testament, quoted four times in the New Testament.

i. *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say?*

"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:1-3)

ii. *Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted?*

While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised?

Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. (Rom. 4:9-10)

iii. *And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to*

perform. And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."

Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us.

It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Rom. 4:19-24).

iv. Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?; just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. (Gal. 3:5-7)

c. He accounted it to him for righteousness: Rom. 4:9-10 makes much of the fact this righteousness was accounted to Abram before he was circumcised (Genesis 17).

No one could say Abram was made righteous because of his obedience or fulfillment of religious law or ritual. It was faith and faith alone that caused God to account Abram as righteous.

i. "When the article of justification has fallen, everything has fallen . . . This is the chief article from which all other doctrines have flowed . . . It alone begets, nourishes, builds, preserves, and defends the church of God; and without it the church of God cannot exist for one hour." (Luther, cited in Boice)

d. He believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness: The faith making Abram righteous wasn't so much believing *in* God (as we usually speak of believing in God), as it was *believing God*.

Those only believing *in* God (in the sense of believing He exists) are merely qualified to be demons (Jam. 2:19).

B. God speaks to Abram's doubt with a covenant.

1. (7-8) Abram's doubts surface again.

Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

a. **Then He said to him:** We don't know if the events beginning with Gen. 15:7 followed close upon what happened in Gen. 15:1-6; the flow of the text seems to indicate they did.

b. After God makes such a dramatic and solemn statement like **I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it**, how could Abram answer God by essentially saying, "prove it"?

i. How could Abram ask **"How shall I know that I will inherit it,"** when God had just accounted him righteous? Abram is experiencing what many of those who are accounted righteous experience. It is as if he says, "I believe when I hear God say it, but five minutes later, I'm not sure!"

ii. Remember, Abram had no title deed to the land, nothing to make anyone else believe he actually owned the land. All he had was the promise of God.

2. (9-11) Abram prepares to make a covenant with God.

So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon."

Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

a. Verse 9 reads more like a shopping list for a witch doctor than something the LORD would ask for. Is God going to concoct some strange potion that will remove all doubt from Abram?

b. But Abram knew exactly what to do with these animals: he **cut them in two . . . and placed each piece opposite the other**.

Abram understood God was telling him to get a contract ready for signing.

i. In those days, contracts were made by the sacrificial cutting of animals, with the split carcasses of the animals lying on the ground. Then both parties to the covenant

would walk through the animal parts together, repeating the terms of the covenant. *The LORD made a covenant* in Gen. 15:18 is literally, "the LORD cut a covenant."

ii. Jer. 34:18-20 makes reference to this same practice of a covenant made by cutting animals and repeating the oath of the covenant as one walks through the animal parts.

iii. The symbolism was plain: first, this is a covenant so serious it is sealed with blood; second, if I break this covenant, let this same bloodshed be poured out on my animals and me!

iv. There is no mistake about it: when Abram has his doubts, and wants assurance from the LORD, God says to him plainly, "let's sign a contract and settle this once for all."

c. As Abram waits for the LORD to appear and walk through the carcasses with him (to sign the covenant), God doesn't come right away, but the vultures do.

i. Abram fully expects God to come down and walk through the animal parts with him, because God had previously appeared to him (Gen. 12:7).

3. (12-16) Prologue to the covenant.

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror and great darkness fell upon him. Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

a. At the end of the day, God has still not appeared to walk through the animal parts with Abram. Instead, God causes a **deep sleep** to fall upon Abram. Apparently, at least part of what follows came to Abram in a dream while he was under this **deep sleep**.

b. **Know certainly:** Abram wanted concrete proof from God, and God will sign the covenant; but Abram should also know he will have land and descendants, but all will not go well with them at all times. Now he knows some dreadful news for certain.

i. After God told him some of the hardship that would befall his descendants, Abram might have said, "If that is what is going to happen, I don't want any children!"

c. Specifically, God tells Abram of the slavery and hardship Israel will endure in Egypt (Exo.

1:1-14), yet they would, after four generations, come back into the Promised Land.

4. (17-21) The covenant is made.

And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces. On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates; the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

a. As Abram is either asleep or perhaps still groggy from the deep sleep he had been under, he sees God do an amazing thing: pass through the animal parts all by Himself, while Abram watches on the sidelines.

b. God represents Himself by two emblems: a **smoking oven and a burning torch**.

i. The **smoking oven** reminds us of the pillar of cloud representing the presence of God (Exo. 13:21-22), the smoke on Mount Sinai (Exo. 19:18), and the cloud of God's Shekinah glory (1Ki. 8:10-12).

ii. The **burning torch** reminds us of the pillar of fire representing the presence of God (Exo. 13:21-22), of the burning bush displaying the presence of God before Moses (Exo. 3:4), and of the fire from heaven which sometimes

consumed sacrifices God was well pleased with (1Ki. 18:38, 1Ch.

21:26, 2Ch. 7:1).

c. God, represented by the smoking oven and the burning torch, passed through the animal parts by Himself; as Abram watched, God showed this was a *unilateral* covenant. Abram never "signed" the covenant, because God "signed" it for both of them.

i. Therefore, the certainty of the covenant God makes with Abram is based on who God is, not on who Abram is or what Abram does. This covenant cannot fail, because God cannot fail.

ii. In a sense, the Father walked through the broken and bloody body of Jesus to establish His covenant with us, and God signed it for both of us. We merely enter into the covenant by faith; we don't *make* the covenant with God.

d. By entering into this contract, there is a sense in which God was saying, "If I don't keep My word, let *Me* be put asunder." God was putting His Deity on the line as a confirmation of His oath to Abram.

i. This covenant God signed alone; Abram did not haggle with God over the terms. God established and Abram accepted. Abram cannot break a contract he has never signed!

ii. "A Divine covenant is not a mutual agreement on equal terms between two parties, but a Divine promise assured." (Maclaren)

e. By quoting the specific lands Abram's descendants will inherit, God makes it plain this is not a "pie in the sky" spiritual promise. It is real, and through it, Israel will inherit real land.

i. "For a very brief time, under Solomon (1Ki. 8:65) and possibly again under Jeroboam II (2Ki. 14:25), the children of Israel ruled all this territory, as a token of the final and permanent possession they will have in the future." (Morris)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** But Abram said, "O sovereign LORD,¹ what will you give me since² I continue to be³ childless, and my heir⁴ is⁵

Eliezer of Damascus?"⁶ **3** Abram added,¹ "Since² you have not given me a descendant, then look, one born in my house will be my heir!"³

4 But look, the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but instead a son who comes from your own body will be your heir."note **5** The LORD took him outside and said, "Gaze into the sky and count the stars – if you are able to count them!" Then he said to him, "So will your descendants be."

6 Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD considered his response of faith as proof of genuine loyalty.

7 The LORD said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." **8** But Abram said, "O sovereign LORD, by what can I know that I am to possess it?"

9 The LORD said to him, "Take for me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." **10** So Abram took all these for him and then cut them in two and placed each half opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in half. **11** When birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 When the sun went down, Abram fell sound asleep, and great terror overwhelmed him. **13** Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign country. They will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. **14** But I will execute judgment on the nation that they will serve. Afterward they will come out with many possessions. **15** But as for you, you will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. **16** In the fourth generation your descendants will return here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its limit."

17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking firepot with a flaming torch passed between the animal parts. **18** That day the LORD made a covenant with Abram: "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River - **19** the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, **20** Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, **21** Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites."

1 Now Sarai,¹ Abram's wife, had not given birth to any children,² but she had an Egyptian servant³ named Hagar.⁴
Guzik - Genesis 16:1-16

Genesis 16 - Hagar and the Birth of Ishmael

A. Sarai gives her servant girl Hagar to Abram.

1. (1-2) Sarai proposes a child for Abram through Hagar.

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. And she had an Egyptian maidservant whose name was Hagar. So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD has restrained me from bearing children. Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai.

a. **She had an Egyptian maidservant:** Hagar was undoubtedly part of what Abram received during his time in Egypt (Gen. 12:16).

b. **Please, go in to my maid; perhaps I shall obtain children by her:** Sarai encouraged Abram to take part in what was essentially a "surrogate mother" arrangement in that day. According to custom, the child would be considered to be the child of Abram and Sarai, not Abram and Hagar.

c. **And Abram heeded the voice of Sarai:** Sarai did something that goes against the nature of wives - to give another woman to her husband. She probably did this because she knew the promise of God (that Abram would be the father of many nations), yet she thought she was the problem with God's promise being fulfilled. So in an effort to

"help God out," she allowed her husband make her servant pregnant.

i. Ginzberg quotes a Jewish tradition saying that before they came to live in the Promised Land, Abram and Sarai regarded their childlessness as punishment for not living in the land. But now they had been in the land for ten years, and they still had no children. Sarai probably felt it was time to do something. After all, doesn't "God help those who help themselves"?

ii. Even though this early form of "surrogate motherhood" was common and accepted in that day, it doesn't mean it was *right*. God is clearly not leading Abram and Sarai.

2. (3-4) Abram agrees with Sarai's suggestion.

Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.

a. **After Abram dwelt ten years in the land:** It had been more than **ten years** since the promise was made regarding Abram's descendants. By most accounts, **ten years** seems like a long time to wait for the promise of God.

i. The long waiting for the promise discouraged them and made them vulnerable to acting in the flesh. Yet, even after this, it would still be more than 13 years until the child of promise came.

ii. When we impatiently try to "help God out"

in the flesh, it accomplishes nothing and may even prolong the time until the promise is fulfilled. Jacob had to live as an exile for 25 years because he thought he had to "help God out" to get his father's blessing. Moses had to tend sheep for 40 years in the desert after he tried to "help God out" by murdering an Egyptian.

iii. It is much better to receive God's help than to try and help Him out in the flesh.

"Those who are truly zealous for God frequently reach for fruit without first dying.

Unfortunately much Christian work is done in this way, and while there is conception, the child that is born can never be the heir.

Christian work that is done merely through the zeal of human effort without counting the body as dead, and Sarai as good as dead, may produce great revival campaigns with but a few genuinely saved, large church memberships with many tares among the wheat." (Barnhouse)

b. **So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived:** Abram was certainly in the flesh when he agreed to inseminate Hagar and not trusting in God's ability to provide an heir through Sarai. But this wasn't a matter of a sensual romance. According to the custom of the day, Hagar would actually sit on the lap of Sarai as Abram inseminated her, to show that the child would legally belong to Sarai, as Hagar was merely a substitute for Sarai.

i. We understand this from the similar occasion of using a servant as a surrogate mother in the case of Rachel's giving of Bilhah to Jacob when Rachel was barren. In that context, Gen. 30:3 reads: *So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her."*

ii. The phrase "bear a child on my knees" refers to the ancient practice of surrogate-adoption. Some believe that the phrase refers only to a symbolic placement of the child on the knees of one who adopts it.

Others believe that it refers to the surrogate sitting on the lap of the adoptive mother during both insemination and birth. For example, referring to Gen. 30:3 the Twentieth Century Bible Commentary says: "These words are probably intended literally, and not merely as figurative adoption."

iii. We should not regard the idea that Hagar was inseminated and gave birth "on the knees" of Sarai as a certainty - we don't know enough about the ancient

practice, and even if it were an ancient custom it doesn't mean that it was followed in every case. But it certainly is a reasonable possibility.

c. **And she conceived:** Then the worst thing from Sarai's perspective happened - Abram succeeded in inseminating Hagar. This proved beyond all doubt the problem was in Sarai, not in Abram, and it also could make people think Hagar was "more of a woman" and more blessed than Sarai.

3. (5-6a) Sarai's anger towards Hagar.

Then Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong be upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. The LORD judge between you and me." So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please."

a. **I became despised in her eyes:** Hagar's contempt for Sarai started the problem. She couldn't resist displaying an inappropriate haughtiness, thinking her pregnancy somehow showed her to be better than Sarai.

b. **My wrong be upon you!** Sarai blamed the whole situation on Abram, and for good cause.

He should have acted as the spiritual leader and told his wife God was able to perform what He promised, and they didn't need to try to "help God out" in the works of the flesh.

c. **Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please:** Abram seemed to make a bad situation worse by turning the situation over to Sarai and not taking care of the child he is father to. Yet, in this, he also puts his relationship with Sarai first, and that is good.

i. These terribly complicated and difficult situations often arise out of our sin. All in all, it is much easier to live life trusting in the LORD. God wants to spare us from these difficulties.

B. Hagar flees from Abram and Sarai.

1. (6b-9) The Angel of the LORD appears to Hagar and instructs her.

And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence. Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand."

a. **She fled from her presence:** As Hagar escaped this difficult situation **the Angel of the LORD** (here, the pre-incarnate presence of Jesus) met her by a spring of water in the wilderness.

i. We can assume that this was God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, appearing to Abraham before His incarnation and birth at Bethlehem. We assume this because of God the Father it says, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (Joh. 1:18), and no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1Ti. 6:16).

Therefore, if God appeared to someone in human appearance in the Old Testament (and no one has seen God the Father) it makes sense the appearance is of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

b. **Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand:** God tells Hagar to do something very difficult: go back to her terrible situation and to submit herself to Sarai. We can suppose that Hagar might get very different counseling from many counselors today.

2. (10-12) The promise of the Angel of the LORD to Hagar.

Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." And the Angel of the LORD said to her: "Behold, you are with child, and you shall bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be

against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

a. **I will multiply your descendants exceedingly:** God has great plans for Hagar's child. He will become a great nation. Indeed, Ishmael will become the father of all the Arabic peoples.

i. Today's battle between Jew and Arab is nothing new. Both Jews and Arabs are descended from Abram by two half-brothers: Ishmael and the son to come later from Abram and Sarai, to be named Isaac.

ii. The entire conflict can be traced back to Abram's decision to "help God out" in the flesh, both when he agreed to inseminate Hagar, and when he went to Egypt to begin with. The effects of our sin may reach far beyond what we ever imagined.

b. **He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him:** Her child's life will not be easy, but God will still bless and sustain him.

God's dealing with Hagar gives us hope. God sees our suffering and desires to touch our life when we suffer.

3. (13-16) God's blessing and protection of Hagar and Ishmael.

Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; observe, it is between Kadesh and Bered. So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

a. **You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees:** Hagar knew this was no mere angel who appeared to her.

The **Angel of the LORD** was also **the-God-Who-Sees**, the same One watching over Hagar and Ishmael.

i. Ishmael is the first man in the Bible to receive his name before he was born.

b. **So Hagar bore Abram a son:** Apparently, Hagar did return with a submitted heart. She told the whole story to Abram and Sarai, and Abram named the child **Ishmael**, just as instructed in the meeting with the Angel of the LORD Hagar described.

i. Hagar might have returned and said, "I fled from you all because I was so miserable and thought I could not continue here. But the LORD met me and told me He would see me through. He told me to come back and submit to you, so that is why I'm here."

After meeting with *El Roi*, (**You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees**), Hagar knew that if God could be with her in the wilderness, He would be with her in having to submit to Sarai also.

ii. "If we seek to change our circumstances, we will jump from the frying pan into the fire. We must be triumphant exactly where we are. It is not a change of climate we need, but a change of heart. The flesh wants to run away, but God wants to demonstrate His power exactly where we have known our greatest chagrin." (Barnhouse)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** So Sarai said to Abram, "Since¹ the LORD has prevented me from having children, have sexual relations with² my servant. Perhaps I can have a family by her."³

Abram did what⁴ Sarai told him.

3 So after Abram had lived¹ in Canaan for ten years, Sarai, Abram's wife, gave Hagar, her Egyptian servant,² to her husband to be his wife.³ **4** He had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant. Once Hagar realized she was pregnant, she despised Sarai.^{note} **5** Then Sarai said to Abram, "You have brought this wrong on me! I allowed my servant to have sexual relations with you, but when she realized that she was pregnant, she despised me. May the LORD judge between you and me!"

6 Abram said to Sarai, "Since your servant is under your authority, do to her whatever you think best." Then Sarai

treated Hagar harshly, so she ran away from Sarai.

7 The LORD's angel found Hagar near a spring of water in the desert – the spring that is along the road to Shur. **8**

He said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" She replied, "I'm running away from my mistress, Sarai."

9 Then the LORD's angel said to her, "Return to your mistress and submit to her authority. **10** I will greatly multiply your descendants," the LORD's angel added, "so that they will be too numerous to count." **11** Then the LORD's angel said to her, "You are now pregnant and are about to give birth to a son.

You are to name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard your painful groans.

12 He will be a wild donkey of a man.

He will be hostile to everyone, and everyone will be hostile to him.

He will live away from his brothers."

13 So Hagar named the LORD who spoke to her, "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "Here I have seen one who sees me!" **14** That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi. (It is located between Kadesh and Bered.) **15** So Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, whom Abram named Ishmael. **16** (Now Abram was 86 years old when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael.)

1 When Abram was 99 years old,¹ the LORD appeared to him and said,² "I am the sovereign God.³ Walk⁴ before me⁵ and be blameless.⁶

Guzik - Genesis 17:1-27

Genesis 17 - God Reaffirms the Covenant

A. An appearance from God, a change of name for Abram.

1. (1-2) God appears to Abram when he is 99 years old.

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.

And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."

a. **The LORD appeared to Abram:** Undoubtedly, this is another appearance of God in the person of Jesus, who took on a temporary human appearance before His incarnation on earth.

b. **I am Almighty God:** First, God told Abram who He is. By this name *El Shaddai*, He revealed His Person and character to Abram. However, there is some debate as to what exactly the name *El Shaddai* means.

i. Kidner: "A traditional analysis of the name is 'God (*e*l) who (*sa*) is sufficient (*day*).'"

ii. Clarke: " *El shaddai, I am God all-sufficient; from shadah, to shed, to pour out.*

I am that God who pours out blessings, who gives them richly, abundantly, continually."

iii. Barnhouse: the Hebrew word *shad* means "chest" or "breast." It may have in mind the strength of a man's chest (God Almighty) or the comfort and nourishment of a woman's breast (God of Tender Care).

iv. Leupold: *Shaddai* comes from the root *shadad*, which means "to display power."

v. We do know the Septuagint translates the word with the Greek *pantokrator* "Almighty,"

the "One who has His hand on everything."

c. **Walk before Me and be blameless:** Then God told Abram what was expected of him. We can only do what God expects of us when we know who He is and know it in a full, personal, real way.

i. The word **blameless** literally means "whole." God wanted *all* of Abram, wanting a total commitment.

d. **I will make My covenant between Me and you:** God also reminded Abram He has not forgotten the covenant. Though it had been some 25 years since the promise was first made, and though it maybe seemed to Abram God forgot, God didn't forget anything.

i. The last time we are told the LORD

communicated with Abram directly was more than 13 years before. Seemingly, Abram had 13 years of "normal" fellowship with God, waiting for the promise all the time. Surely, at times during those years, Abram felt God forgot.

ii. Abram was becoming a great man of faith, but you don't make a great man of faith overnight. It takes years of God's work in them, years of almost mundane trusting in God, interspersed with a few spectacular encounters with the LORD.

2. (3-8) God refers to specific terms of the covenant He has not forgotten.

Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

a. **No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham:** To encourage Abram's faith in the promise of descendants, God changed Abram's name from **Abram** (father of many) to **Abraham** (father of many nations).

i. There was, no doubt, a sense in which **Abram** - "father of many" - was a hard name to bear for a man who was the father of none, especially in a culture where inquiry about one's personal life was a courteous practice. Now God went a step further and made his name "father of many nations."

It is almost preposterous for a childless man to have such a name.

ii. Think of when Abraham announced his name change to others. They must have thought he wanted to *escape* the burden of his name. Instead he increased the burden.

iii. There are many wonderful name changes in the Bible, such as when God changed Jacob's name to *Israel* (Gen. 32:28), and when He changed Simon's name to *Peter* (Mar. 3:16). God promises a wonderful new name to every overcomer in Him (Rev. 2:17).

iv. God gives us many names in faith (saint, righteous, chosen, royal priesthood, sons of God, and so forth), and He knows He will accomplish the meaning of the name in us - even if it seems preposterous.

b. **As an everlasting possession:** To encourage Abraham's faith in the promise of the land, God repeated the promise again, reminding Abraham it is an **everlasting possession** given by an **everlasting covenant**.

3. (9-14) God institutes a sign of the covenant for Abraham and his descendants.

And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the

flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

a. **Every male child among you shall be circumcised:**

For the first time, God gave Abraham something to *do* in regard to the covenant. He told them to take upon themselves a **sign of the covenant**, showing they received the covenant by faith.

b. **You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins:** The sign was circumcision, the cutting away of the male foreskin. God chose this sign for many important reasons.

i. Circumcision was not unknown in the world at that time. It was a ritual practice among various peoples.

ii. There were undoubtedly hygienic reasons, especially making sense in the ancient world. "There is some medical evidence that this practice has indeed contributed to the long-lasting vigor of the Jewish race." (Morris) McMillen, in *None of These Diseases*, noted studies in 1949 and 1954 showing an incredibly low rate of cervical cancer for Jewish women, because they mostly have husbands who are circumcised.

iii. But more importantly, circumcision is a cutting away of the flesh and an appropriate **sign of the covenant** for those who should put no trust in the flesh.

iv. Also, because circumcision deals with the organ of procreation, it was a reminder of the special seed of Abraham, which would ultimately bring the Messiah.

c. **He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised:** God probably commanded the circumcision of children to take place on the eighth day because this is the day when an infant's immune system is at the optimum level for such a procedure.

i. McMillen also notes newborn children have a peculiar susceptibility to bleeding between the second and fifth days of life. It seems an important blood-clotting agent, vitamin K, is not formed in the normal amount until the fifth to seventh

day of life. Another blood clotting agent, prothrombin, is at its highest levels in infants on precisely the eighth day of life, making the eighth day the safest, earliest day to circumcise an infant.

d. The uncircumcised male child . . . he has broken

My covenant: Those who rejected circumcision rejected the **sign of the covenant**. They were no friends of the covenant God made with Abraham. It wasn't that circumcision made them a part of the covenant (faith did), but rejection of circumcision was a rejection of the covenant.

i. Unfortunately, through the centuries, the Jews began to trust more in the *sign* of the covenant (circumcision) than in the *God* of the covenant, believing that circumcision by itself was sufficient and necessary to save.

Paul refutes this idea extensively, especially in light of the finished work of Jesus (Gal.

5:1-15).

ii. Therefore, Christians are free to either circumcise or not. One may do so for social or hygienic reasons but it doesn't get us any closer to God: *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

(Gal. 5:6)

iii. The closest Christian parallel we have to circumcision is baptism. Paul relates the two ideas together in Col. 2:11-12. However, baptism is also a "sign" of the covenant; it does not save us, but is a sign of the covenant that does. Being baptized does not save us, but no Christian should refuse baptism.

B. The promise of a son to both Abraham and Sarah.

1. (15-16) The promise is stated: a son will come through Sarah, whose name is changed from Sarai.

Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her and also give you a son by her; then I will bless

her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples shall be from her."

a. **As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name:** There is only a subtle difference between **Sarai** and **Sarah**, but it is an important difference. " *Sarai* signifies *my lady*, or *my princess*, which confines her dominion to one family; but *Sarah* signifies either a *lady* or *princess*, simply and absolutely without restriction, or *the princess of a multitude*" (Poole) .

b. **And I will bless her and also give you a son by her:** God made it plain that this son will not come about by another surrogate-mother situation (as with Hagar and Ishmael). Sarah herself will give birth, even though it is past her time in life to do so (Sarah was about 90 years old at this time).

2. (17-18) Abraham's response to the promise.

Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" And Abraham said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

a. **Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed:** Abraham's laugh didn't seem to be one of cynical doubt, but of rejoicing in something he knew was impossible by all outward appearance, but that God could perform.

b. **Shall a child be born to a man who is one hundred years old?** He knew both he and Sarah were well past the time people normally have children. Yet, *in the presence of Him whom he believed; God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he*

was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.

*He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. (Rom. 4:17-21) c. **Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!***

At the same time, Abraham didn't really understand God's promise completely. He perhaps thought God simply meant Ishmael would be Sarah's "spiritual son." Abraham - like all of us - found it hard to trust God for more than what he can conceive of.

3. (19-22) God repeats the promise and names the child who will come forth from Abraham and Sarah.

Then God said: "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his descendants after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year." Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

a. **Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac:** The son will be named **Isaac** ("laughter") because he will be such a joy to his parents, but also to always remind Abraham he laughed at God's promise to give him a son through Sarah at this late age.

b. **As for Ishmael, I have heard you.**

Behold, I have blessed him: Ishmael *will* be blessed (because Abraham prayed he would), but the covenant and its promises will pass only through the son to come, the son of promise.

4. (23-27) Abraham carries out God's command of circumcision.

So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; and all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

a. **And circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him:** Abraham's belief in the covenant was proved by his obedience to the command.

What we really believe will show in our actions.

b. **That very same day Abraham was circumcised:** Abraham's obedience was *complete* (**every male among the men of Abraham's house**), *prompt* (**that very same day**), and *daring* (to virtually incapacitate all his fighting men at the same time).

i. Abraham didn't need to pray about this.

He didn't need to grow or transition into this.

God said it, and he did it. This is a wonderful example of obedience from a great man of faith.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Then I will confirm my covenant¹ between me and you, and I will give you a multitude of descendants."²

3 Abram bowed down with his face to the ground,¹ and God said to him,² **4** "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of a multitude of nations.note **5**

No longer will your name be Abram. Instead, your name will be Abraham because I will make you the father of a multitude of nations. **6** I will make you extremely fruitful. I will make nations of you, and kings will descend from you.

7 I will confirm my covenant as a perpetual covenant between me and you. It will extend to your descendants after you throughout their generations. I will be your God and the God of your descendants after you. **8** I will give the whole land of Canaan – the land where you are now residing – to you and your descendants after you as a permanent possession. I will be their God.”

9 Then God said to Abraham, “As for you, you must keep the covenantal requirement I am imposing on you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. **10** This is my requirement that you and your descendants after you must keep: Every male among you must be circumcised. **11** You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskins. This will be a reminder of the covenant between me and you. **12** Throughout your generations every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, whether born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not one of your descendants. **13** They must indeed be circumcised, whether born in your house or bought with money. The sign of my covenant will be visible in your flesh as a permanent reminder. **14** Any uncircumcised male who has not been circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin will be cut off from his people – he has failed to carry out my requirement.”

15 Then God said to Abraham, “As for your wife, you must no longer call her Sarai; Sarah will be her name. **16** I will bless her and will give you a son through her. I will bless her and she will become a mother of nations. Kings of countries will come from her!”

17 Then Abraham bowed down with his face to the ground and laughed as he said to himself, “Can a son be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” **18** Abraham said to God, “O that Ishmael might live before you!”

19 God said, “No, Sarah your wife is going to bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. I will confirm my covenant with

him as a perpetual covenant for his descendants after him. **20** As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will indeed bless him, make him fruitful, and give him a multitude of descendants. He will become the father of twelve princes; I will make him into a great nation. **21**

But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this set time next year.” **22** When he finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

23 Abraham took his son Ishmael and every male in his household (whether born in his house or bought with money) and circumcised them on that very same day, just as God had told him to do. **24** Now Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised; **25** his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised. **26** Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on the very same day. **27** All the men of his household, whether born in his household or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

1 The LORD appeared to Abraham¹ by the oaks² of Mamre while³ he was sitting at the entrance⁴ to his tent during the hottest time of the day.

Guzik - Genesis 18:1-33

Genesis 18 - The Promise of Isaac Confirmed

A. Abraham meets some very important visitors.

1. (1-5) Abraham invites the LORD and two others to a meal. Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant."

They said, "Do as you have said."

a. **Then the LORD appeared:** Apparently, this happened a short time later. In Gen. 17:21, God said Sarah would give birth one year later, and at this time, she is not yet pregnant. So this couldn't be more than three months after the events in Genesis 17.

b. **Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees:** Here again, the LORD came to Abraham in human appearance. This is another presentation of Jesus in human form before His incarnation.

i. We can assume that this was God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, appearing to Abraham before His incarnation and birth at Bethlehem. We assume this because of God the Father it says, *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (Joh. 1:18), and no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1Ti. 6:16).

Therefore, if God appeared to someone in human appearance in the Old Testament (and no one has seen God the Father) it makes sense the appearance is of the eternal Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

c. **Behold, three men were standing by him:** We don't know if Abraham immediately recognized who these visitors were. Though the LORD (in the Person of Jesus Christ) appeared to Abraham twice before (Gen. 12:7, 17:1), we don't know if Jesus looked the same each time, or if Abraham could just know who this was.

d. **He ran from the tent door to meet them:** According to his godliness and the customs of that culture, Abraham offered the hospitality of his house to these travelers.

2. (6-8) Sarah and Abraham prepare a meal for their visitors. So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he

hastened to prepare it. So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

a. **Abraham hurried into the tent:** Again, to us this may seem to be overdoing it, but ancient culture had an extremely strong sense of hospitality to visitors. *And* it is also likely Abraham knew it was the LORD visiting him.

3. (9-10) God reconfirms His promise of a son.

Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent." And He said, "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son." (Sarah was listening in the tent door which was behind him.)

a. **I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son:** We may wonder why God repeated the promise again, so close to the time when He said it previously. After all, it seems God was silent about the promise for more than 13 years. Now He came personally to repeat it twice in three months.

b. **Sarah your wife shall have a son:** We *need* to hear God's promises over and over again. It is a way God uses to encourage and develop our faith: *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God* (Rom. 10:17).

i. Perhaps also, Abraham and Sarah needed this visit to be an encouragement for them to do what they needed to do in bringing God's promise to pass - to have sexual relations.

4. (11-12) Sarah's reaction to God's promise.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; and Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?"

a. **After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure?** Sarah laughed within herself at this promise. She could not believe God would literally grant this child as the result of normal sexual relations.

i. Leupold translates Gen. 18:12, "After I have become worn out, have I enjoyed sexual delight and my lord too is an old man?" Leupold then observes, "The matter is not put very delicately by Sarah."

ii. It may be, even after the dramatic promises of Genesis 17, Abraham and Sarah had a way of "spiritualizing" God's promise, making it mean something other than what God intended. Here, God made it plain: Abraham and Sarah will have normal sexual relations and produce a baby.

iii. It is strangely characteristic of us to believe God's promise for a long, long, time, and endure through much discouragement along the way, until the promise is *almost there*, and then we find doubt. We are grateful that He is greater than our doubts.

b. **Sarah had passed the age of childbearing:** By all outward circumstance, there was good reason for Sarah to "spiritualize"

the promise and laugh at its literal meaning.

She **had passed the age of childbearing**, which literally seems to mean, "the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah." She had stopped menstruating and had gone through menopause.

i. Even accounting for their long lives (Abraham lived to be 175 and Sarah 127), they were both well past middle age. It would take a miracle of God for them to have literal children through normal means.

c. **Therefore Sarah laughed within herself:** Significantly, this is what Sarah (and Abraham) *most wanted all their lives*. Yet, they find it so hard to believe God's promise when He says He will grant it to them.

5. (13-15) God answers Sarah's laugh.

And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear a child, since I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

a. **Why did Sarah laugh:** God heard Sarah's laugh even though she *laughed within herself*.

There was nothing hidden before the LORD.

i. We might live very differently if we remembered that God hears and knows everything we think and say.

b. **At the appointed time I will return to you:** We might think God would say, "I gave you this promise twice and twice you laughed at it. That's it! No more promise. I'll take it to someone who will appreciate it." Instead, God responded by dealing with her sin of unbelief, but not by taking away the promise.

i. *If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself* (2Ti. 2:13).

c. **Is there anything too hard for the LORD?** Thankfully not, and God can also triumph even over our weak faith.

i. **Hard** is the same word for *wonderful* in Isa. 9:6: *For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given . . . And His name will be called Wonderful*. Jesus is our "wonderful"

One, and He isn't too **hard** or wonderful for God to give unto us.

d. **The LORD said to Abraham:** Significantly, God dealt with **Abraham** about this, not Sarah herself, because Abraham was the head of his home.

B. Abraham intercedes for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1. (16-19) God decides to reveal to Abraham the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the

way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

a. **Abraham went with them to send them on the way:**

As would be customary for a hospitable host in that day, Abraham will accompany his guests on their journey for a while as they depart.

b. **Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing:** Because of what God would bring from Abraham (**a great and mighty nation**), and because Abraham had to be a great leader (**that he may command his children and his household after him**), God will reveal to Abraham what He will do with Sodom and Gomorrah.

i. This point is vital; God's purpose in this is not "gossip" with Abraham about what He will do, nor is it to satisfy Abraham's curiosity. God wanted to do something in Abraham's life through what He will reveal to him.

2. (20-21) God tells Abraham He will see if Sodom and Gomorrah are worthy of judgment.

And the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

3. (22-26) Abraham asks an important question: will God destroy the righteous with the wicked?

Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. And Abraham came near and said, "Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous that were in it?"

Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" So the LORD said, "If I find in Sodom

fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

a. **The men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD:** We see the two **men** are actually the angels who visited Sodom in Genesis 19. The third "man" in the party is actually the **LORD** Himself.

b. **And Abraham came near:** Abraham **came near** to the LORD. Effective intercession is a matter of drawing near to God so we can pray with *His* heart.

c. **Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked?** In discussing this question, Abraham "reminded" the LORD of His own nature and principles (**shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?**) Abraham thought that God, as a righteous **Judge** could not punish the innocent the same way as the guilty.

i. Prayer is effective because it prays knowing who God is, and how God works in a particular situation. Effective prayer doesn't see itself as a passive spectator in what God does, but acts as if it must "remind" God in prayer.

ii. We might find it remarkable Abraham even *cared* about the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. He might have just prayed "LORD, get my nephew Lot out of there first," but he didn't. Abraham's heart was full of sorrow and compassion, even for the wicked of Sodom and Gomorrah.

d. **If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes:** God said this because Abraham asked. When Abraham drew near to the LORD

and prayed according to God's revealed nature and will, God agreed. The LORD said that He would spare the city if there were 50 righteous there.

4. (27-33) Abraham bargains with God for Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who am but dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to

the Lord: Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for lack of five?" So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy it." And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?" So He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty."

Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there." And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?" So He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of twenty." Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?" And He said, "I will not destroy it for the sake of ten." So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

a. **Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous:** Now the principle is established - God will not destroy the righteous with the wicked - now it is just a matter of numbers. How many righteous people will God spare the city for?

i. Abraham's intercession was effective because it was *specific*. He talked about specific numbers with God, not in broad, general terms. Often our prayers are ineffective because we really don't ask the LORD to *do* anything. Instead we often just toss wishes up to heaven.

b. **Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak:** Abraham continued his intercession with a "bold humility." He was not proud or arrogant before the LORD, but he still continued to ask.

i. Abraham's humility was demonstrated in that nowhere in his prayer did he ask "Why?" or did he demand that God explain Himself and His actions.

c. **Suppose ten should be found there?**

Abraham was a skilled negotiator and he prevailed upon God to lower the number of righteous required to spare the city. First by units of five, then by units of ten, until the number settled at ten.

i. It is impossible to miss the persistence of Abraham in intercession. Why didn't he give it up at 40 or 50 and say simply "it's in the LORD's hands" or "the LORD will do what the LORD will do"? Because an intercessor must feel, at the moment of prayer, that the eternal destiny of men depends on his prayer.

ii. This is the kind of heart God wanted to draw out of Abraham - a heart that cared so much for people made in the image of God that he worked hard to intercede on behalf of a city that deserved judgment. This was the heart a great leader of a great and mighty nation needed to have.

iii. Remember, there is a sense in which all this negotiation was fruitless. There were not ten righteous people in the city, only four. The cities were destroyed. Yet God specifically revealed the fate of these cities to Abraham to draw out of him an intercessor's heart of love, so even before the time of Jesus Abraham could be *conformed into the image of His Son* (Rom.

8:29) who is Himself an intercessor (Heb. 7:25).

d. **Abraham returned to his place:** We wonder if Abraham should not have continued the negotiations because there were only four righteous in the city. Would God have spared the city for four if Abraham had asked? Perhaps Abraham felt Lot would surely have brought six people beyond his own family to God in his time in Sodom.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Abraham¹ looked up² and saw³ three men standing across⁴ from him. When he saw them⁵ he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed low⁶ to the ground.⁷

3 He said, "My lord,¹ if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by and leave your servant.² **4** Let a little water be brought so that you may all wash your feet and rest under the tree.^{note} **5** And let me get a bit of food so that you may refresh yourselves since you have passed by your servant's home. After that you may be on your way." "All right," they replied, "you may do as you say."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick! Take three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make bread." **7** Then Abraham ran to the herd and chose a fine, tender calf, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it. **8** Abraham then took some curds and milk, along with the calf that had been prepared, and placed the food before them. They ate while he was standing near them under a tree.

9 Then they asked him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" He replied, "There, in the tent." **10** One of them said, "I will surely return to you when the season comes round again, and your wife Sarah will have a son!" (Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, not far behind him.

11 Abraham and Sarah were old and advancing in years; Sarah had long since passed menopause.) **12** So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, "After I am worn out will I have pleasure, especially when my husband is old too?"

13 The LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child when I am old?' **14** Is anything impossible for the LORD? I will return to you when the season comes round again and Sarah will have a son." **15** Then Sarah lied, saying, "I did not laugh,"

because she was afraid. But the LORD said, "No! You did laugh."

16 When the men got up to leave, they looked out over Sodom. (Now Abraham was walking with them to see them on their way.) **17** Then the LORD said, "Should I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? **18** After all, Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all the

nations on the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using his name. **19** I have chosen him so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then the LORD will give to Abraham what he promised him.”

20 So the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so blatant **21** that I must go down and see if they are as wicked as the outcry suggests. If not, I want to know.”

22 The two men turned and headed toward Sodom, but Abraham was still standing before the LORD. **23** Abraham approached and said, “Will you sweep away the godly along with the wicked? **24** What if there are fifty godly people in the city? Will you really wipe it out and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty godly people who are in it? **25** Far be it from you to do such a thing – to kill the godly with the wicked, treating the godly and the wicked alike! Far be it from you! Will not the judge of the whole earth do what is right?”

26 So the LORD replied, “If I find in the city of Sodom fifty godly people, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

27 Then Abraham asked, “Since I have undertaken to speak to the Lord (although I am but dust and ashes), **28** what if there are five less than the fifty godly people? Will you destroy the whole city because five are lacking?” He replied, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”

29 Abraham spoke to him again, “What if forty are found there?” He replied, “I will not do it for the sake of the forty.”

30 Then Abraham said, “May the Lord not be angry so that I may speak! What if thirty are found there?” He replied, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

31 Abraham said, “Since I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty are found there?” He replied, “I will not destroy it for the sake of the twenty.”

32 Finally Abraham said, “May the Lord not be angry so that I may speak just once more. What if ten are found there?” He

replied, "I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten."

33 The LORD went on his way when he had finished speaking to Abraham. Then Abraham returned home.

1 The two angels came to Sodom in the evening while¹ Lot was sitting in the city's gateway.² When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face toward the ground.

Guzik - Genesis 19:1-38

Genesis 19 - The Destruction of Sodom and

Gomorrah

A. The two angels come to Sodom.

1. (1-3) Lot convinces the angelic visitors to stay with him.

Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square."

But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

a. **Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom:** There has been a steady progression of compromise in Lot's life. He went from looking toward Sodom (Gen. 13:10), to pitching his tent toward Sodom (Gen. 13:12), then to living in Sodom (Gen. 14:12) and losing everything. Now Lot sits in **the gate of Sodom**, indicating he is a civic leader.

i. Lot himself was a righteous man who was grieved by the sin he saw around him (2Pe.

2:7-8), but because of his compromise few of his family and none of his friends were saved. Compromise destroyed his testimony.

b. **He insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house:** The hospitality offered to the visitors was not unusual, but the urgency with which Lot offered it was.

2. (4-9) The wickedness and depravity of the men of Sodom. Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every

quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." So Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof." And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door.

a. **Where are the men who came to you tonight?**

Bring them out to us: These citizens of Sodom clearly came to homosexually abuse and rape these two visitors. That is a shocking demonstration of depravity, but we are just as shocked at the willingness of Lot to give up his daughters to the mob as we are at the sinful desire of the mob itself.

b. **I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish:** The offer is horrible and cannot be justified. We understand it a *little* more when we consider the low place of women in the pre-Christian world and the very high place of any guest in your home. It was understood a guest was to be protected more than your own family.

c. **That we may know them carnally:** The sin of the men of Sodom is plainly connected to their homosexuality. There is no doubt the Bible declares homosexual conduct is sin (Rom. 1:26-28).

i. The Bible condemns homosexuality in the same context as it condemns incest and bestiality (Lev. 18:22, 20:13). If we ignore the word of God at the point of homosexual conduct,

then we have no standing to say any of the other three sins are sin.

ii. Homosexual advocates have an interest in saying homosexuals are exactly like everyone else, except they love people of their own sex. But when the conduct of homosexuals is observed, this is not the case.

iii. We can bring out statistics on the number of partners homosexuals have: 43% of homosexuals say they have had 500 or more sexual partners in their lifetime. Only 1% of homosexuals say they have had four or less sexual partners in their lifetime. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, 77% of homosexuals say they have met sexual partners in a city park, 62% in a homosexual bar, 61% in a theater, 31% in a public restroom. Only 28% of homosexuals said they had known their partners for at least a week before participating in homosexual sex.

iv. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why males pursue and give in to homosexual desires is because they want to immerse themselves in a lifestyle of dangerous sex with no inhibitions or obstacles, and sense that sex with other men is an easier path to this. No wonder Paul connects "burning lust"

and *a debased mind* with male homosexuality in Rom. 1:27-28.

v. Homosexuals also have an interest in saying that up to 10% of the population is homosexual. But the most reliable statistics show only 2.3% of men in their 20's and 30's report ever having had a homosexual experience. Only 1.1% reported being exclusively homosexual. These low figures agree with several other recent surveys and surveys done in Britain and France.

vi. Homosexuals also have an interest in saying they were "born that way." All attempts thus far to prove this have been based more on wishful thinking than solid biological research, but if it is found to be the case, so what? The Bible

teaches we are all born with a predisposition to sin. It shouldn't surprise us that some 2% of the population finds this predisposition expressed in homosexual desire.

vii. Homosexuals also have an interest in defining themselves as "gay," a word that used to mean "happy" or "carefree," but it is a poor description of a lifestyle that has such a high rate of death, disease, and suicide.

d. **This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting like a judge:** This shows Lot's feeble efforts at providing moral and spiritual leadership were rejected and mocked by the men of Sodom.

i. Perhaps Lot thought that through compromise he might reach these men, but just the opposite has happened. They have no respect for him whatsoever, even though his "buddy-buddy" approach leads him to call such wicked men **my brethren**.

3. (10-11) Angelic protection at the door.

But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.

And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door.

a. **The men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door:** It must have taken great, perhaps supernatural, strength to do what the angels did at the door. Obviously, the work of striking the men blind was supernatural. Now this mob had a physical blindness appropriate to their moral blindness.

B. The angels' deliverance of Lot.

1. (12-14) The angels warn Lot; Lot warns his family.

Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city; take them out of this place! For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law,

who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

a. **To his sons-in-law:** Lot's daughter were unmarried and had not known a man (Gen.

19:8). These men were **sons-in-law** by the ancient practice of binding betrothal, not by marriage yet.

b. **He seemed to be joking:** The effect of Lot's life of compromise is clearly seen. When he spoke with utmost seriousness to his sons-in-law about the judgment of God, they did not believe him. Not even *they* will be saved from the judgment to come.

i. The life of Lot shows us that it is possible to have a saved soul and a wasted life. Lot will be saved, but his life will accomplish nothing, as in 1Co. 3:15: *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

2. (15-16) The angels try to hurry Lot and his family.

When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city.

a. **While he lingered:** Too much of Lot's heart was in Sodom, so he was not anxious to leave the city. This lack of urgency to do the things of God is a common sign of compromise and a backslidden condition.

b. **They brought him out and set him outside the city:** In Genesis 18 Abraham asked God to spare the cities of Sodom and Gommorrah if there were ten righteous found there. Because there were not ten righteous people, God will not spare the city. But He will still answer the *heart* of

Abraham's prayer by bringing Lot and his family out of Sodom, even if it is practically against Lot's will.

i. Lot was in the worst of all possible places.

He had too much of the world to be happy in the LORD, and too much of the LORD to be happy in the world.

3. (17-22) The escape from Sodom.

So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there."

Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

a. **Please, no, my lords!** Lot seems pathetic and whimpering in his prayer. Notice the sad contrast to the bold intercession of Abraham.

b. **I cannot do anything until you arrive there:** This answers the question, *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Gen. 18:25).

God, bound by His own righteousness and honor, *could not* bring this judgment on Sodom until the righteous people were delivered.

C. God's judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

1. (23-26) The cities destroyed, Lot's wife turned to a pillar of salt.

The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD

out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

a. **Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah:** Today, many think these cities are buried under the Dead Sea, and their complete destruction is a testament to God's judgment and grace in delivering His righteous people.

i. Before this destruction the area of Sodom was unbelievably beautiful and productive, *like the garden of the LORD* (Gen. 13:10).

Yet, this great privilege and blessing did not turn their hearts toward God.

ii. As well, the people of Sodom and Gomorrah saw more of the power, grace, and mercy of God than any of the other people of the region. They had been delivered from ruin by God's work through Abraham. They heard the testimony from Melchizedek and saw the example of Melchizedek and Abraham.

b. **But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt:** Lot's wife was turned to a pillar of salt because she **looked back behind**, after the angels had specifically said *Do not look behind you* (Gen.

19:17). Some think she lingered behind and was caught up in the cataclysm somehow, but it was probably a unique judgment of God on her for the state of her heart (a love for Sodom and regret for its destruction) shown by her action of looking back.

i. "The word *looked back* has the connotation of *looking intently*. It might possibly be rendered *lagged back*, or maybe even *returned back*." (Morris) ii. In referring to the end times, Jesus uttered some almost cryptic words in Luk.

17:32: *Remember Lot's wife*. In other words, no Christian should have a heart like Lot's wife as we see the end of the

age, a heart that loves the world, and will in some sense, regret the judgment God will bring on it.

iii. We need to look *forward* to our deliverance, not *back* at a world passing away and ripe for judgment.

2. (27-29) Abraham learns of Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction.

And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

a. **He saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace:** When Abraham saw the smoke of the these cities and their destruction, he could know that his request was answered. God delivered Lot before the destruction came.

3. (30-32) Lot and his daughters live in a wilderness cave.

Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man on the earth to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father."

a. **Let us make our father drink wine:** Lot and his family lost everything in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even so, they quickly have a stock of **wine**. They either brought this with them or they obtained it quickly. This shows the priorities of a compromising heart.

b. **We will lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father:** This is a remarkable - and seemingly desperate sin from Lot's daughters. Some suggest

that they believed that the whole world had perished with Sodom and Gomorrah, and it was now their responsibility to "repopulate" the earth.

However, their brief time in Zoar was enough to show there were other people.

i. Evidently they decided it was the only thing to do under the circumstances, *except* to trust God, which did not seem to occur to them at all. Obviously living in Sodom affected more than Lot. The effects were also clearly seen in his daughters.

4. (33-38) Moab and Ammon are born from this incestuous relationship.

So they made their father drink wine that night.

And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve the lineage of our father." Then they made their father drink wine that night also.

And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

a. **The firstborn went in and lay with her father:** We may be uncomfortable with the idea that the Bible includes the record of such disgraceful sins. Yet, Donald Barnhouse observes: "It is far better for children to learn the facts of life from the Word of God where sin is condemned than from dirty words on alley walls, or from lewd stories. No one can escape knowledge of sin . . . these things are never mentioned without being accompanied by the stern warnings that God hates sin and punishes it."

i. "Ironically, in his own drunkenness Lot carried out the shameful act that he himself had suggested to the men of Sodom: he lay with his own daughters." (Sailhamer) b. **Moab; he is the father of the Moabites . . . Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon:** Their descendants will be enemies and obstacles for Israel, just like the descendants of Ishmael. Lot's life ended in ruin (past, present, and future), all because of his love for the world.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He said, "Here, my lords, please turn aside to your servant's house. Stay the night¹ and wash your feet. Then you can be on your way early in the morning."² "No," they replied, "we'll spend the night in the town square."³

3 But he urged¹ them persistently, so they turned aside with him and entered his house. He prepared a feast for them, including bread baked without yeast, and they ate.

4 Before they could lie down to sleep, all the men – both young and old, from every part of the city of Sodom – surrounded the house.^{note} **5** They shouted to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we can have sex with them!"

6 Lot went outside to them, shutting the door behind him. **7** He said, "No, my brothers! Don't act so wickedly! **8**

Look, I have two daughters who have never had sexual relations with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do to them whatever you please. Only don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

9 "Out of our way!" they cried, and "This man came to live here as a foreigner, and now he dares to judge us!

We'll do more harm to you than to them!" They kept pressing in on Lot until they were close enough to break down the door.

10 So the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house as they shut the door. **11** Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, from the youngest to the oldest, with blindness. The men outside wore themselves out trying to find the door. **12** Then the two visitors said to Lot, "Who else do you have here? Do you have any sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or other relatives in the city? Get them out of this place **13** because we are about to destroy it. The outcry against this place is so great before the LORD that he has sent us to destroy it."

14 Then Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law who were going to marry his daughters. He said, "Quick, get out of this place because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was ridiculing them.

15 At dawn the angels hurried Lot along, saying, "Get going! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or else you will be destroyed when the city is judged!" **16** When Lot hesitated, the men grabbed his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters because the LORD had compassion on them. They led them away and placed them outside the city. **17** When they had brought them outside, they said, "Run for your lives! Don't look behind you or stop anywhere in the valley! Escape to the mountains or you will be destroyed!"

18 But Lot said to them, "No, please, Lord! **19** Your servant has found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness by sparing my life. But I am not able to escape to the mountains because this disaster will overtake me and I'll die. **20** Look, this town over here is close enough to escape to, and it's just a little one. Let me go there. It's just a little place, isn't it? Then I'll survive."

21 "Very well," he replied, "I will grant this request too and will not overthrow the town you mentioned. **22** Run there quickly, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there." (This incident explains why the town was called Zoar.) **23** The sun had just risen over the land as Lot reached Zoar. **24**

Then the LORD rained down sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah. It was sent down from the sky by the LORD. **25** So he overthrew those cities and all that region, including all the inhabitants of the cities and the vegetation that grew from the ground. **26** But Lot's wife looked back longingly and was turned into a pillar of salt.

27 Abraham got up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD. **28** He looked out toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of that region. As he did so, he saw the smoke rising up from the land like smoke from a furnace.

29 So when God destroyed the cities of the region, God honored Abraham's request. He removed Lot from the midst of the destruction when he destroyed the cities Lot had lived in.

30 Lot went up from Zoar with his two daughters and settled in the mountains because he was afraid to live in Zoar. So he lived in a cave with his two daughters. **31**

Later the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man anywhere nearby to have sexual relations with us, according to the way of all the world. **32** Come, let's make our father drunk with wine so we can have sexual relations with him and preserve our family line through our father."

33 So that night they made their father drunk with wine, and the older daughter came and had sexual relations with her father. But he was not aware that she had sexual relations with him and then got up. **34** So in the morning the older daughter said to the younger, "Since I had sexual relations with my father last night, let's make him drunk again tonight. Then you go and have sexual relations with him so we can preserve our family line through our father."

35 So they made their father drunk that night as well, and the younger one came and had sexual relations with him. But he was not aware that she had sexual relations with him and then got up.

36 In this way both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. **37** The older daughter gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the ancestor of the Moabites of today. **38** The younger daughter also gave birth to a son and named him Ben-Ammi. He is the ancestor of the Ammonites of today.

1 Abraham journeyed from there to the Negev¹ region and settled between Kadesh and Shur. While he lived as a temporary resident² in Gerar, Guzik - Genesis 20:1-18

Genesis 20 - Abraham Lies About Sarah Again

A. Abraham's lie, God's protection.

1. (1-2) Abraham lies in a similar manner as before.

And Abraham journeyed from there to the South, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and stayed in Gerar. Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.

a. **Abraham journeyed from there to the South:** After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham moved. Perhaps he did not want to live in the hills overlooking the destroyed region any longer, and be reminded of those people and the judgment visited upon them.

b. **Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister."** Abraham's concern was probably not because Sarah looked like a young beauty at 90 years of age. We can surmise that she was reasonably attractive at that age, but more importantly she was connected to one of the richest and most influential men of the region.

In that day, a harem was more of a political statement than a romantic statement.

i. We should not ignore the idea of Sarah's attractiveness even in old age. "She had in some measure been physically rejuvenated, in order to conceive, bear, and nurse Isaac, and possibly this manifested itself in renewed beauty as well."

(Morris) c. **She is my sister:** This is the same lie Abraham told back in Gen. 12:10-13. He shows that it is all too easy to slip back into sinful habits. Abraham stumbles in a place he

stumbled before. Instead of trusting God to keep his family together, he devised his own plan to do it. His plan will fail completely.

i. Age does not automatically sanctify us.

Unless yielded to the Spirit of God, we will repeat in our old age the sinful patterns of our youth.

2. (3-7) God threatens judgment upon Abimelech for taking Sarah.

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

a. **Indeed you are a dead man:** This is a scary thing to hear from God, even in a dream.

But the point had to be made to Abimelech, even though he could truly say he was acting **in the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands**.

i. This may seem drastic, but the stakes were high. "Suppose Abimelech had taken Sarah and God had not intervened? Two seeds would have been at the door to Sarah's womb, and to this day an element of doubt would cling to the ancestry of our Lord." (Barnhouse)

b. **I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart:** Because Abimelech's **heart** was right in this regard, God kept him from worse sin. God's protecting power can guide even a pagan king.

i. Despite Abraham's failure to really trust God in the situation, God was not going to abandon him. He would not *let* Abimelech touch Sarah. That womb was going to bring forth the son of promise, who would eventually bring forth God's Messiah. God wasn't leaving this matter up to man!

c. **For he is a prophet, and he will pray for you:** Even though Abraham is in sin, he is still **a prophet** and man of powerful prayer. God's mercy did not leave Abraham, even though Abraham didn't trust God the way he should.

B. Abraham is rebuked again.

1. (8-10) Abraham (just like last time) suffers rebuke from a heathen king.

So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid.

And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"

a. **You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done:** It is sad to see that Abimelech - the pagan king - is in the right, and Abraham - the man of God is in the wrong, and Abimelech tells Abraham so.

b. **What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?** This is a logical question for Abimelech to ask Abraham.

Abraham certainly did not have the LORD **in view** when he lied and failed to trust God.

2. (11-13) Abraham's excuse.

And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will kill me on account of my wife. But indeed she is truly my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother;

and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' "

a. **Surely the fear of God is not in the place:** This was Abraham's excuse for his sinful deception by saying, but the real problem was that the **fear of God** wasn't in Abraham. If he really respected the LORD, His commandments, His promises, and His protection, then Abraham would have never trusted in his own efforts to keep his family together.

b. **Indeed she is truly my sister:** This is another attempt to justify his lie, by saying it is really the truth. But a half-truth, said with intent to deceive, is always a whole lie.

c. **When God called me to wander from my father's house:** This is an indirect way of blaming God for the problem. Abraham claims that God sent him out on this dangerous journey upon which Abraham had to protect himself.

i. "There is a terrible meaning in this verb *wander* which Abraham uses. The Hebrew word occurs exactly fifty times in Scripture and never in a good sense. It is used of animals going astray, of a drunken man reeling, or staggering, of sinful seduction, of a prophet's lies causing the people to err, of the path of a lying heart. Six other words are translated *wander*, any one of which Abraham might have used, but he used the worst word available." (Barnhouse) ii. "Abraham should have said: 'Forgive me, Abimelech, for dishonoring both you and my God. My selfish cowardice overwhelmed me, and I denied my God by fearing that He who called me could not take care of me. He is not as your gods of wood and stone. He is the God of glory. He is the living God, the Creator, the most High God, possessor of heaven and earth. He told me He would be my shield and my exceeding great reward, and supplier of all my needs . . . In sinning against Him, I sinned against you. Forgive me,

Abimelech.'" (Barnhouse) 3. (14-18) Abimelech's gift recompenses Sarah, and Abraham prays for him.

Then Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. And Abimelech said, "See, my land is before you; dwell where it pleases you." Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; indeed this vindicates you before all who are with you and before everybody." Thus she was reprov'd. So Abraham prayed to God; and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore children; for the LORD had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

a. **Abimelech took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham:** In showing such generosity to Abraham, Abimelech is essentially heaping coals of fire on Abraham's head (Rom. 12:20).

Abraham should have been giving gifts to Abimelech, because he was in the wrong.

i. Also, it is interesting to see Abraham *accepts* these gifts, when he had refused gifts from a pagan king previously (Gen.

14:21-24), because he wanted no one to think a man had made him rich. Here, because of Abraham's compromise, he finds it hard to reclaim the same high moral ground.

b. **I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver:** We can imagine the irony in Abimelech's voice when he refers to Abraham as Sarah's **brother**.

c. **Thus she was reprov'd:** The ancient Hebrew word for **reprov'd** is "*yakach*." It has the idea of "set right," so it is debatable as if Sarah was "set right" by Abimelech's rebuke, or if she was "found to be right" because of her humble submission in this occasion. In a sense, both are true.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Abraham said about his wife Sarah, "She is my sister."

So Abimelech, king of Gerar, sent for Sarah and took her.

3 But God appeared¹ to Abimelech in a dream at night and said to him, “You are as good as dead² because of the woman you have taken, for she is someone else’s wife.”³

4 Now Abimelech had not gone near her. He said, “Lord, would you really slaughter an innocent nation?note **5** Did Abraham not say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I have done this with a clear conscience and with innocent hands!”

6 Then in the dream God replied to him, “Yes, I know that you have done this with a clear conscience. That is why I have kept you from sinning against me and why I did not allow you to touch her. **7** But now give back the man’s wife. Indeed he is a prophet and he will pray for you; thus you will live. But if you don’t give her back, know that you will surely die along with all who belong to you.”

8 Early in the morning Abimelech summoned all his servants. When he told them about all these things, they were terrified. **9** Abimelech summoned Abraham and said to him, “What have you done to us? What sin did I commit against you that would cause you to bring such great guilt on me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done!” **10** Then Abimelech asked Abraham, “What prompted you to do this thing?”

11 Abraham replied, “Because I thought, ‘Surely no one fears God in this place. They will kill me because of my wife.’

12 What’s more, she is indeed my sister, my father’s daughter, but not my mother’s daughter. She became my wife. **13** When God made me wander from my father’s house, I told her, ‘This is what you can do to show your loyalty to me: Every place we go, say about me, “He is my brother.”’”

14 So Abimelech gave sheep, cattle, and male and female servants to Abraham. He also gave his wife Sarah back to him. **15** Then Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you; live wherever you please.”

16 To Sarah he said, "Look, I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your 'brother.' This is compensation for you so that you will stand vindicated before all who are with you."

17 Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, as well as his wife and female slaves so that they were able to have children. **18** For the LORD had caused infertility to strike every woman in the household of Abimelech because he took Sarah, Abraham's wife.

1 The LORD visited¹ Sarah just as he had said he would and did² for Sarah what he had promised.³

Guzik - Genesis 21:1-34

Genesis 21 - The Birth of Isaac

A. The birth of Isaac.

1. (1) God fulfills His promise to Abraham and Sarah.

And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken.

a. **The LORD visited Sarah as He had said:** It took a long time (25 years) for this promise to come to pass, but God was faithful to His promise. God's promises never fail.

b. **As He had spoken:** The promise of a son was not fulfilled because Abraham was perfect in his obedience, but because God was faithful to His Word.

i. Some promises of God are conditional and depend on something we must do. But other promises of God are unconditional, and God will fulfill them not because of what we do, but because of who He is.

2. (2-7) The child is named Isaac.

For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore to him; Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. And Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and all who hear will laugh with me." She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah

would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."

a. **Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him; whom Sarah bore to him; Isaac:** Originally, the name **Isaac** was meant as somewhat of a rebuke of the laughter of Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17:17-19 and 18:12-15), but God turned a gentle rebuke into an occasion for joy.
b. Isaac becomes a wonderful type (picture) of Jesus: Both were the promised sons.

1

Both were born after a period of delay.

2

Both mothers were assured by God's 3 omnipotence (Gen. 18:13-14; Luk. 1:34, 37).

Both were given names rich with meaning 4 before they were born.

Both births occurred at God's appointed time 5 (Gen. 21:2; Gal. 4:4).

Both births were miraculous.

6

Both births were accompanied by joy (Gen.

7

21:6; Luk. 1:46-47; 2:10-11).

B. Conflict between Ishmael and Isaac.

1. (8-11) Sarah wants Abraham to cast out both Hagar and Ishmael.

So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.. Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son.

a. **The child grew and was weaned:** Some ancients say children were not weaned until 12 years of age and some say five years, but the most reliable research indicates an age of three.

b. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar . . .

scoffing: This conflict between the two sons was almost inevitable, even though they are some 13 years apart. Abraham found it hard to side with Sarah when he did not want to reject his son, Ishmael.

i. Notice the conflict came *from* Ishmael unto Isaac. Ishmael was the one **scoffing** at Isaac. Gal. 4:22-29 describes for us a spiritual application of this conflict between Isaac (the son born of the promise) and Ishmael (the son born of the flesh).

ii. In Galatians 4, the Jewish legalists who troubled the Galatians protested they were children of Abraham and thus blessed. Paul will admit they are children of Abraham, but they are like Ishmael, not Isaac! The legalists claimed Abraham as their father.

Paul wants to know who was their *mother*, Hagar or Sarah? Ishmael was born of a slave, and born according to the flesh. Isaac was born of a freewoman, and born according to promise. Even so, the legalists promote a relationship with God based in bondage and according to the flesh. The true gospel of grace offers liberty in Christ and is a promise received by faith.

iii. Even as Ishmael and his descendants have persecuted Isaac and his descendants, we should not be surprised that the modern-day people who follow God in the flesh persecute those who follow God in faith through the promise.

2. (12-14) Under God's instruction, Abraham puts out Hagar and Ishmael.

But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he

gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba.

a. **Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice:** Perhaps Abraham did not want to give up Ishmael because he was sort of a "backup" plan. If something should happen to Isaac, there would always be Ishmael. But God wanted it clear there was no backup plan for Abraham other than God Himself.

i. Abraham might have been tempted to reject Sarah's counsel just because it was Sarah; but he sought the LORD in the matter, did what Sarah suggested, and without feeling he was "giving in" to Sarah.

b. **Sent her away:** God's solution was clear - get rid of the son of the flesh. There is to be no reconciliation with the flesh, no peaceful coexistence. The son of the flesh must simply be put away forever.

i. The solution is the same in our own battle between trusting in the flesh and trusting in the Holy Spirit: *cast out this bondwoman and her son*. Law and grace cannot live together as principles for our Christian life, and there is no question we belong to the free, not the bondwoman.

c. **Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba:** It may have seemed ruthless of Abraham to do this, but it was exactly what God wanted, and exactly what needed to happen.

i. Flesh and blood do not make the strongest bond God wants us to honor. There are circumstances where we can do nothing other than put away family for the glory of God.

ii. God wants us to be ruthless with the flesh in the same manner: *And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* (Gal. 5:24).

d. **Took bread and a skin of water:** Abraham was a wealthy man and could certainly spare more provisions, even giving them a donkey or several pack animals. But Abraham realized that without God's help, no matter what

he gave them, it would not be enough. But *with* God, things would turn out all right.

3. (15-21) God preserves Ishmael and Hagar in the desert.

And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

a. **Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is:** As God protects and preserves them out in the desert; He answers them by hearing the **voice of the lad**. God is showing special favor to Ishmael because he is a descendant of Abraham.

b. **I will make him a great nation:** The descendents of Ishmael became the Arabic people.

C. Abraham makes a covenant with a Philistine king.

1. (22-24) Abraham makes a no-hostility treaty with Abimelech.

And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. Now therefore, swear to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt." And Abraham said, "I will swear."

a. **Abimelech . . . spoke to Abraham:** How could this be the same Abimelech of Genesis 20? It isn't the same. **Abimelech** is the *title* of a ruler among the Canaanites, not a specific name.

b. **God is with you in all that you do:** Abimelech noticed this because of Abraham's integrity and because of the blessing evident in his life.

2. (25-31) In return for the treaty, Abraham clears up a dispute about an important well.

Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants had seized. And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard of it until today." So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

Then Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?" And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well." Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

3. (32-34) Abraham calls on the name of the LORD.

Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. Then Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

a. **Called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God:** Even through this time of conflict in his family and among his neighbors, Abraham kept a real, live walk with God.

Conflict can drive us away from God, but we should allow it to push us closer to Him.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** So Sarah became pregnant¹ and bore Abraham a son in his old age at the appointed time that God had told him.

3 Abraham named his son – whom Sarah bore to him – Isaac.¹ **4** When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him just as God had commanded him to do.

note **5** (Now Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.) **6** Sarah said, “God has made me laugh. Everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.” **7** She went on to say, “Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have given birth to a son for him in his old age!”

8 The child grew and was weaned. Abraham prepared a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** But Sarah noticed the son of Hagar the Egyptian – the son whom Hagar had borne to Abraham – mocking. **10** So she said to Abraham, “Banish that slave woman and her son, for the son of that slave woman will not be an heir along with my son Isaac!”

11 Sarah’s demand displeased Abraham greatly because Ishmael was his son. **12** But God said to Abraham, “Do not be upset about the boy or your slave wife. Do all that Sarah is telling you because through Isaac your descendants will be counted. **13** But I will also make the son of the slave wife into a great nation, for he is your descendant too.”

14 Early in the morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He put them on her shoulders, gave her the child, and sent her away. So she went wandering aimlessly through the wilderness of Beer Sheba. **15** When the water in the skin was gone, she shoved the child under one of the shrubs. **16** Then she went and sat down by herself across from him at quite a distance, about a bowshot away; for she thought, “I refuse to watch the child die.” So she sat across from him and wept uncontrollably.

17 But God heard the boy's voice. The angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and asked her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Don't be afraid, for God has heard the boy's voice right where he is crying. **18** Get up! Help the boy up and hold him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation." **19** Then God enabled Hagar to see a well of water. She went over and filled the skin with water, and then gave the boy a drink.

20 God was with the boy as he grew. He lived in the wilderness and became an archer. **21** He lived in the wilderness of Paran. His mother found a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

22 At that time Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in all that you do. **23** Now swear to me right here in God's name that you will not deceive me, my children, or my descendants.

Show me, and the land where you are staying, the same loyalty that I have shown you."

24 Abraham said, "I swear to do this." **25** But Abraham lodged a complaint against Abimelech concerning a well that Abimelech's servants had seized. **26** "I do not know who has done this thing," Abimelech replied. "Moreover, you did not tell me. I did not hear about it until today."

27 Abraham took some sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech. The two of them made a treaty. **28** Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs apart from the flock by themselves. **29** Abimelech asked Abraham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe lambs that you have set apart?" **30** He replied, "You must take these seven ewe lambs from my hand as legal proof that I dug this well."

31 That is why he named that place Beer Sheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

32 So they made a treaty at Beer Sheba. Then Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, returned to the land of the Philistines. **33** Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer Sheba. There he worshiped the LORD, the eternal God.

34 So Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines for quite some time.

1 Some time after these things God tested¹ Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am!" Abraham² replied.

Guzik - Genesis 22:1-24

Genesis 22 - Abraham Willing to Offer Isaac

A. God's command to Abraham and his response.

1. (1-2) God tests the faith of Abraham.

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

a. **God tested Abraham:** This was not so much a test to *produce* faith, as it was a test to *reveal* faith. God built Abraham slowly, piece by piece, year by year, into a man of faith.

b. **Take now your son, your only son Isaac:** Significantly, God calls Isaac **your only son Isaac**, when in fact Abraham had another son, Ishmael. But since Ishmael was put away from Abraham's family, then as far as God was concerned, Abraham had only one son.

c. **Offer him there as a burnt offering:** God tells Abraham to offer him as a **burnt offering**.

This was not an offering that was burned alive, but one first sacrificed and then completely burnt before the LORD.

i. How would we react if God told us to do such a thing? Jack Smith, a columnist for the L.A. Times, was discussing this Biblical incident with his readers. He said he would have told God to mind his own business.

That's what the world always says to God.

ii. Would God tell someone to do this today?

In 1993, a man named Andrew Cate was sentenced to 60 years in prison after being convicted of fatally shooting his 2-year-old daughter, then walking naked through his

neighborhood carrying her body. Cate claimed he was acting out the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, and God would do a miracle to win his brother to Christianity.

Cate believed God would miraculously stop him at the last moment before killing his daughter. The man was obviously deranged.

What Abraham did was something completely unique in God's redemptive history, given for a specific purpose once for all fulfilled. There is no way God would ever direct someone to do this same thing today.

d. **Offer him there as a burnt offering:** This test was especially hard because it seemed to contradict the previous promise of God. Hadn't God promised *in Isaac your seed shall be called* (Gen. 21:12)? If Isaac hadn't had children to pass the promise on to yet, how could Abraham kill him? Wouldn't he be killing the very promise God made to him?

i. Abraham had to learn the difference between trusting the promise and trusting the Promiser. We can put God's promise before God Himself and feel it is our responsibility to bring the promise to pass, even if we have to disobey God to do it.

ii. Trust the Promiser no matter what, and the promise will be taken care of!

e. **On one of the mountains of which I shall tell you:**

There was a specific *place* God commanded Abraham to go, a particular spot where this would happen. God is carefully directing each detail.

f. **Your only son Isaac, whom you love:** This is the first mention of **love** in the Bible, and it is the love between father and son, and connected with the idea of the sacrificial offering of the son.

2. (3) Abraham's immediate response of faith.

So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.

a. **So Abraham rose early:** There is not the slightest hint of hesitation on Abraham's part.

Abraham **rose early in the morning** to do this. Yet at the same time, who could sleep that night?

i. Abraham is trusting God, even *when he does not understand*. Sometimes we say, "I'm not going to obey or believe until I understand it all," but that is making myself equal with God.

ii. He didn't debate or seek counsel from others. He knew what to do and employed no stalling tactics.

iii. Abraham is trusting, *even when he does not feel like it*. There is not a line in this text about how Abraham felt, not because he didn't feel, but because he was walking by faith, not feelings.

iv. God had been training Abraham, bringing him to this place of great trust. In just the last chapter, God asked Abraham to "give up" Ishmael in a less severe way. God used that, and everything else, to train up Abraham.

b. **Saddled his donkey:** Abraham seems to personally saddle his donkey and split the wood.

Though he had plenty of servants to do this for him, Abraham did it himself because even in his old age, is a bundle of nervous energy.

c. **Went to the place of which God had told him:** In wonderful, trusting obedience, Abraham went right to the spot. Abraham does this even though it would have been if God asked Abraham to offer himself instead of Isaac.

B. Abraham's offering of Isaac.

1. (4-8) Abraham journeys to the place of sacrifice with Isaac.

Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of

them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

a. **On the third day:** Abraham came to the place on **the third day**. The region of Moriah is associated with Mount Moriah, which is modern-day Jerusalem (2Ch. 3:1).

b. **I will go yonder and worship:** This is the first use of the word **worship** in reference to God in the Bible. The Hebrew word "*shachah*"

simply means, "to bow down." While Abraham and Isaac did not go to the mount to have a time of joyful praise, they did go to bow down to the LORD.

c. **And we will come back to you:** Abraham is full of faith when he speaks to the young men who are with him. He believes that **we will come back**.

i. Does this mean Abraham somehow knew this was only a test and God would not really require this of him? Not at all. Instead, Abraham's faith is in the knowledge that should he kill Isaac, God would raise him from the dead, because God had promised Isaac would carry on the line of blessing and the covenant.

ii. He knew *in Isaac your seed shall be called* (Gen. 21:12), and Isaac had yet to have any children. God had to let him live *at least* long enough to have children.

iii. *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.* (Heb. 11:17-19) iv. He knew anything was possible, but it was impossible that God would break His promise. He knew God was not a liar. He had no precedent

(no one in the Bible had yet been raised from the dead), but Abraham knew God was able. God could do it!

d. **Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son:** We see Isaac carried the wood for his own sacrifice up the hill.

e. **He took the fire in his hand, and a knife:** Abraham took the knife up the hill. He didn't "forget" it. "That knife was cutting into his own heart all the while, yet he took it. Unbelief would have left the knife at home, but genuine faith takes it." (Spurgeon) f. **The two of them went together:** This literally means "the two of them went in agreement." Isaac is doing this knowingly and willingly. The phrase is repeated twice.

i. At this time, Abraham doesn't know *how* God will provide. He is still trusting in the ability of God to raise Isaac from the dead, but he won't stop trusting just because he doesn't know how God will come through.

g. **My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering:** Abraham knew God would provide a sacrifice, but where?

Where was the lamb? That question had been asked by all the faithful, from Isaac to Moses to David to Isaiah, all the way to the time of John the Baptist when he declares: *Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

(Joh. 1:29)

2. (9) Isaac willingly lies down on the altar.

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

a. **Then they came to the place:** Apparently, even on Mount Moriah, there was a specific place God told Abraham to stop, because this was the place to do this.

b. **Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac:** At this time, Abraham was

more than 100 years old, and Isaac would have been able to get away had he chosen to. Yet he submits to his father perfectly. In remembering Abraham's faith, we should never forget Isaac's faith.

i. Jewish commentators think Isaac was in his thirties at the time of this event.

c. **Upon the wood:** As an obedient son, Isaac laid down on the wood, ready to be sacrificed.

3. (10-14) God's merciful reprieve.

And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

a. **Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son:** We must believe Abraham was completely willing to plunge the knife into Isaac, because his faith was in God's ability to raise Isaac from the dead, not in God's desire to stop the sacrifice.

Abraham didn't think this was playacting.

i. One may say, "It's not fair or right. God told Abraham to do something and then told him not to. If God really wanted to test Abraham, He would have made him plunge the knife into his son's chest."

ii. God *often* takes the *will* for the *deed* with his people. When He finds them truly *willing* to make the sacrifice He demands, He often does not require it. This is how we can be

martyrs without ever dying for Jesus. We live the *life* of a martyr right now.

iii. But, "Often there are believers who wonder how they may know the will of God.

We believe that ninety per cent of the knowing of the will of God consists in willingness to do it before it is known."
(Barnhouse)

b. **You have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me:** Abraham displayed his heart towards God in that he was willing to give his only son. God displays His heart towards us in the same way, by giving His *only begotten Son* (Joh. 3:16).

i. When God asked Abraham for the ultimate demonstration of love and commitment, He asked for Abraham's son. When the Father wanted to show us the ultimate demonstration of His love and commitment to us, He gave us His Son. We can say to the LORD, "Now I know that You love me, seeing You have not withheld Your Son, Your only Son from me."

c. **Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son:** All the while, God still required a sacrifice. God didn't call off the sacrifice. Instead, He required that there be a substitute provided by God Himself.

d. **Abraham called the name of the place:** The naming of the place is significant. Abraham called it, **The LORD Will Provide** (*Jehovah Jireh*); **In this mount, it shall be provided.**

i. Abraham didn't name the place in reference to what *he* went through. He didn't name it "trial hill" or "agony hill" or "obedience hill." Instead, he named the hill in reference to what *God* did; he named it "provision hill." He named it knowing God would provide the ultimate sacrifice for salvation on that hill someday.

ii. **As it is said to this day:** apparently, Moses meant even in his own day, men would look at that hill and say, "**In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.**"

iii. This event is also a prophecy of Jesus' rising from the dead on the *third day*, as 1Co. 15:4 says *He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures*. But where does it say in the Old Testament specifically the Messiah would rise again on the third day? It says so here, through the picture of Isaac.

Isaac was "reckoned dead" by Abraham as soon as God gave the command, and Isaac was "made alive" ("risen") three days later.

iv. Isaac's picture of Jesus becomes even clearer:

Both were loved by their father.

1

Both offered themselves willingly.

2

Both carried wood up the hill of their 3 sacrifice.

Both were sacrificed on the same hill.

4

Both were delivered from death on the 5 third day.

4. (15-19) God reconfirms His promise to Abraham in light of his faith.

Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

a. **Blessing I will bless you:** Imagine how happy Abraham was after passing this test of trust.

b. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore:

By rough calculations, the number of stars in the sky and grains of sand on the seashore are the same: 10 to the 25th power.

5. (20-24) The listing of Nahor's family.

Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." And Bethuel begot Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.

His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

a. "A *concubine* was an inferior kind of wife, taken according to the common practice of those times, subject to the authority of the principal wife, and whose children had no right of inheritance, but were endowed with gifts." (Poole)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** God¹ said, "Take your son – your only son, whom you love, Isaac² – and go to the land of Moriah!³ Offer him up there as a burnt offering⁴ on one of the mountains which I will indicate to⁵ you."

3 Early in the morning Abraham got up and saddled his donkey.¹ He took two of his young servants with him, along with his son Isaac. When he had cut the wood for the burnt offering, he started out² for the place God had spoken to him about.

4 On the third day Abraham caught sight of the place in the distance.^{note} **5** So he said to his servants, "You two stay here with the donkey while the boy and I go up there. We will worship and then return to you."

6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. Then he took the fire and the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together. **7** Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father?" "What is it, my son?" he

replied. "Here is the fire and the wood," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" **8**

"God will provide for himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son," Abraham replied. The two of them continued on together.

9 When they came to the place God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood on it.

Next he tied up his son Isaac and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. **10** Then Abraham reached out his hand, took the knife, and prepared to slaughter his son. **11**

But the LORD's angel called to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am!" he answered. **12** "Do not harm the boy!" the angel said. "Do not do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God because you did not withhold your son, your only son, from me."

13 Abraham looked up and saw behind him a ram caught in the bushes by its horns. So he went over and got the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place "The LORD provides." It is said to this day, "In the mountain of the LORD provision will be made."

15 The LORD's angel called to Abraham a second time from heaven **16** and said, "'I solemnly swear by my own name,' decrees the LORD, 'that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, **17** I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be as countless as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the strongholds of their enemies. **18** Because you have obeyed me, all the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants.'"

19 Then Abraham returned to his servants, and they set out together for Beer Sheba where Abraham stayed.

20 After these things Abraham was told, "Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor - **21** Uz the firstborn,

his brother Buz, Kemuel (the father of Aram), **22** Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." **23** (Now Bethuel became the father of Rebekah.) These were the eight sons Milcah bore to Abraham's brother Nahor. **24** His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore him children - Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

1 Sarah lived 127 years.¹

Guzik - Genesis 23:1-20

Genesis 23 - Sarah Dies and Is Buried

A. The death of Sarah.

1. (1) The death of Sarah.

Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.

a. **Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years:**

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded; it gives us some measure of understanding how great a woman she is in the Bible.

b. **The life of Sarah:** Nowhere in the Bible are we told to look to Mary as an example of a godly woman. Twice we are told to look to Sarah as such an example (Isa. 51:1-2 and 1Pe.

3:3-6).

2. (2) Abraham's mourning.

So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

a. **Abraham came to mourn for Sarah:** "That is, he set himself deliberately to all the functions of a mourner." (Boice) Abraham wasn't afraid to mourn, though he did not sorrow as those without hope (1Th. 4:13).

b. **And to weep for her:** "To weep for a loved one is to show that we have been close, that the loss is keenly felt, that death is an enemy, and that sin has brought this sad punishment upon the human race." (Boice) B. Abraham buys land for Sarah's burial.

1. (3-16) Abraham haggles with the Philistines for the land of Sarah's tomb.

Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner and a visitor among you. Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight." And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my lord: You are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead." Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you." Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who entered at the gate of his city, saying, "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!" Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you will give it, please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take it from me and I will bury my dead there." And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, "My lord, listen to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver.

What is that between you and me? So bury your dead." And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

a. **I am a foreigner and a sojourner among you:**
Abraham did not feel this way because he came from Ur of

the Chaldeans. It was because he recognized his real home was heaven. Moses knew the same, and commanded Israel to know it (Lev. 25:23). David also knew this truth (1Ch. 29:14 and Psa. 39:12).

b. **Give me property for a burial place among you:** This way of negotiating the price is typical of ancient and modern practices in that culture. As a gesture of kindness, the selling party may offer to give the property in question to the buyer, until the buyer insists on paying a price.

i. The Canaanite, Ephron, follows the cultural customs of bargaining. First, the seller offers to *give* the item. Then, when that is refused, the seller suggests a price, which he claims is modest but is really very high. This is understood to be the starting point, and from there the bargaining begins.

c. **Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land:** Abraham shows how a Christian should do business with the world: *courteously, fairly, prudently*.

i. "They who, under the sanction of religion, trample under foot the decent forms of civil respect, supposing that because they are religious, they have a right to be rude, totally mistake the spirit of Christianity" (Clarke).

2. (17-20) Abraham buys the field and buries Sarah.

So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within all the surrounding borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

a. **Were deeded to Abraham as a possession:** The text emphasizes this property was Abraham's land by deed, not

only by the promise of God. If this was the only piece of land Abraham ever owned in the land promised to him, it shows he was a real man of faith.

b. Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah: This is where Isaac and Ishmael buried Abraham. Isaac and Rebekah were both buried here. Jacob buried Leah here, and Joseph buried Jacob here. And this was the place Joseph told his descendants to bury him, taking his bones with them when they came into the Promised Land.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Then she¹ died in Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.²

3 Then Abraham got up from mourning his dead wife¹ and said to the sons of Heth,² **4** “I am a temporary settler among you. Grant me ownership of a burial site among you so that I may bury my dead.” **5** The sons of Heth answered Abraham, **6** “Listen, sir, you are a mighty prince among us! You may bury your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None of us will refuse you his tomb to prevent you from burying your dead.”

7 Abraham got up and bowed down to the local people, the sons of Heth. **8** Then he said to them, “If you agree that I may bury my dead, then hear me out. Ask Ephron the son of Zohar **9** if he will sell me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him sell it to me publicly for the full price, so that I may own it as a burial site.”

10 (Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth.) Ephron the Hethite replied to Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth – before all who entered the gate of his city – **11** “No, my lord! Hear me out. I sell you both the field and the cave that is in it. In the presence of my people I sell it to you. Bury your dead.”

12 Abraham bowed before the local people **13** and said to Ephron in their hearing, "Hear me, if you will. I pay to you the price of the field. Take it from me so that I may bury my dead there."

14 Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, **15** "Hear me, my lord. The land is worth 400 pieces of silver, but what is that between me and you? So bury your dead."

16 So Abraham agreed to Ephron's price and weighed out for him the price that Ephron had quoted in the hearing of the sons of Heth - 400 pieces of silver, according to the standard measurement at the time.

17 So Abraham secured Ephron's field in Machpelah, next to Mamre, including the field, the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field and all around its border, **18** as his property in the presence of the sons of Heth before all who entered the gate of Ephron's city.

19 After this Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah next to Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. **20** So Abraham secured the field and the cave that was in it as a burial site from the sons of Heth.

1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years,¹ and the LORD had blessed him² in everything.

Guzik - Genesis 24:1-67

Genesis 24 - Isaac and Rebekah

A. Abraham's commission to his servant.

1. (1-4) Abraham sends out a servant to seek out a bride for his son.

Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

a. **The oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had:** This is the servant named *Eliezer* (Gen. 15:2), or at least he was some 60 years before this. If it was someone else, the Holy Spirit didn't want us to know it.

b. **Put your hand under my thigh:** According to ancient custom, this describes a very serious oath. Abraham is extremely concerned that Isaac not be married to a Canaanite bride.

2. (5-9) The commission clearly defined.

And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

a. **Abraham said to him:** Apparently, Abraham anticipated that he might die while his servant was gone, so the instructions were made perfectly clear.

b. **Beware that you do not take my son back there:** Isaac, the son of promise, never once left the Promised Land.
B. The servant's mission fulfilled.

1. (10-14) Eliezer's prayer to God.

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, "O LORD

God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'; let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

a. **O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day:** Essentially, Eliezer asks God to guide through providential circumstances, which is not always a bad way to discern God's will.

i. However, generally speaking, circumstances alone can be a dangerous way to discern God's will. We have a way of ignoring circumstances which speak against what we want (or attributing them to the devil), while focusing on the circumstances that speak for what we want.

ii. But in this case, Eliezer establishes what he will look for before anything happens. He isn't making up the rules as he goes along.

b. **Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink:** Eliezer was wise enough to ask for a sign that was remarkable, but (in human terms) possible. He didn't tempt God by asking for fire to fall from heaven or for protection as he leapt from the pinnacle of the temple.

c. **Let her be the one:** In praying this prayer, there is a sense in which Eliezer "stacked the deck" against finding someone. It would take a remarkable woman to volunteer for this tedious task.

i. Considering that a camel may drink up to 20 gallons, watering ten camels meant at least an hour of hard work.

d. **By this I will know:** Eliezer cares nothing about what the woman will *look* like. He wants a woman of character, a woman whom God has chosen.

2. (15) God answers the servant's prayer before it was finished.

And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder.

a. **Before he had finished speaking:** Isa.

65:24 speaks of this kind of gracious answer to prayer: *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.*

b. **Rebekah . . . came out with her pitcher on her shoulder:** The servant did not yet *know* the prayer was answered, only time would prove it.

3. (16-21) The servant, though surprised, waits for complete confirmation of his prayer.

Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

a. **The young woman was very beautiful to behold:** We generally regard the Bible as being given to understatement. When we read Rebekah was **very beautiful to behold**, we should understand Rebekah was indeed *very* beautiful.

b. **The servant ran to meet her:** The servant did not think it was unspiritual to introduce himself to Rebekah; yet,

he certainly did not do anything to suggest she provide water for the camels. Prayer is no substitute for action.

c. **And drew for all his camels:** As Rebekah began the hard work of watering all the camels, the servant did not stop her. He wanted a woman who would not only *say* she would water the camels, but who would actually *do* it.

i. Perhaps Eliezer knew that for some, it is much easier to talk like a servant than to actually serve. He wanted to see if she had a servant's *heart*, not only a servant's *talk*.

4. (22-28) The servant, when the bride has been chosen, gives her rich gifts even before the marriage to the father's son.

So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold, and said, "Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" So she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge." Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD.

And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things.

a. **A golden nose ring:** Some think it gross that Rebekah would wear a nose ring, but there was certainly nothing strange, shocking, or rebellious about it in that culture.

b. **Being on the way, the LORD led me:** It is hard to steer a parked car. If we want to be guided by the LORD, we should be on our way.

5. (29-33) Laban entertains the servant.

Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well.

So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, "Come in, O blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels."

Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." And he said, "Speak on."

a. When he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists: Laban's eyes are very much on the riches the servant brings; yet, he also shows appropriate hospitality.

6. (34-49) The servant tells his story and what he is there for.

So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; and to him he has given all that he has. Now my master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' But he said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give her to you, then you will be released from my oath.' And this day I came to the well and said, 'O LORD God of my

master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw water, and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink," and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,"; let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.' But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.'

So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also.

Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

C. Rebekah is brought to Isaac.

1. (50-53) The family agrees to give Rebekah to Isaac. The father's servant gives more gifts.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."

And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

a. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother: When an agreement of marriage had been

made, it was customary for the bridegroom (or his representative) to give the family of the bride gifts as a dowry to demonstrate his financial ability to provide for the bride.

2. (54-60) The servant intends to depart quickly; Rebekah agrees.

And he and the men who were with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us a few days, at least ten; after that she may go." And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands; and may your descendants possess the gates of those who hate them."

a. **I will go**: One of the most remarkable things about Rebekah is her total willingness to leave all to be with a bridegroom she has never seen.

Her words "**I will go**" are worthy words of faith.

b. "**Do not hinder me**" . . . "**I will go**" : "If the world does not succeed in persuading the believer to abide in the world, it will seek to delay his exit . . . When you decide to go with the Lord, the world will applaud your devotion but will say, 'Don't rush. Abide a few days, at least ten, and then go.'" (Barnhouse) 3. (61-67) Rebekah is brought unto Isaac; they marry.

Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed. Now Isaac came from the way of Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. And Isaac went out to

meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

a. **So the servant took Rebekah and departed:** We can well imagine the conversations Rebekah and Eliezer would have on the journey. She would want to know all she could about Isaac, whom she loved without ever seeing, and he would be delighted to tell her.

i. Rebekah would never dream of telling Eliezer the best way to get her to the home of her bridegroom, but many of us will reject the Holy Spirit's guidance in our life.

b. **She took a veil and covered herself:** The covering with a veil signified chastity, modesty, and submission. This is how Rebekah wants to meet her bridegroom.

c. **Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening:** This is the first mention of Isaac since he was left on top of Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:19). We see nothing of Isaac from the time of his "resurrection" to the time he is united with his bride.

i. In all this, we see the coming together of Isaac and Rebekah as a remarkable picture of the coming together of Jesus and the church.

· A father desires a bride for his son · A son was just accounted as "dead" and "raised from the dead" A nameless servant is sent forth to get a bride for the son

· The servant's name is actually *Eliezer*, meaning "God of help" or "helper"

· The lovely bride is divinely met, chosen, and called, and then lavished with gifts · She is entrusted to the care of the servant until she meets her bridegroom ii. The way Isaac and Rebekah came to each other is also instructive. Neither were "dating" or any such thing. They were serving God and seeking Him (Isaac did **meditate in the field**), and God brought them together. They obviously were more concerned with the will of God than with modern notions of romantic love.

4. Summarizing the pictures of Isaac, Rebekah, Jesus, and the Church.

a. *Both Rebekah and the church*: Chosen for marriage before they knew it (Eph.

1

1:3-4).

Necessary for the accomplishment of God's 2 eternal purpose (Eph. 3:10-11).

Destined to share in the glory of the son (Joh.

3

17:22-23).

Learn of the son through his representative.

4

Must leave all with joy to be with the son.

5

Are loved and cared for by the son.

6

b. *Both Isaac and Jesus*: Were promised before their coming.

7

Finally appeared at the appointed time.

8

Were conceived and born miraculously.

9

Given a special name before birth.

10

Offered up in sacrifice by the father.

11

Brought back from the dead.

12

Head of a great company to bless all people.

13

Prepared a place for their bride.

14

Had a ministry of prayer while the bride 15
comes.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Abraham said to his servant, the senior one¹ in his household who was in charge of everything he had, “Put your hand under my thigh² **3** so that I may make you solemnly promise¹ by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth: You must not acquire² a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living. **4** You must go instead to my country and to my relatives to find a wife for my son Isaac.” **5** The servant asked him, “What if the woman is not willing to come back with me to this land? Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”

6 “Be careful never to take my son back there!”

Abraham told him. **7** “The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and the land of my relatives, promised me with a solemn oath, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ He will send his angel before you so that you may find a wife for my son from there. **8** But if the woman is not willing to come back with you, you will be free from this oath of mine. But you must not take my son back there!” **9** So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and gave his solemn promise he would carry out his wishes.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed with all kinds of gifts from his master at his disposal. He journeyed to the region of Aram Naharaim and the city of Nahor. **11** He made the camels kneel down by the

well outside the city. It was evening, the time when the women would go out to draw water. **12** He prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, guide me today. Be faithful to my master Abraham. **13** Here I am, standing by the spring, and the daughters of the people who live in the town are coming out to draw water. **14** I will say to a young woman, 'Please lower your jar so I may drink.' May the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac reply, 'Drink, and I'll give your camels water too.' In this way I will know that you have been faithful to my master."

15 Before he had finished praying, there came Rebekah with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah (Milcah was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor). **16** Now the young woman was very beautiful. She was a virgin; no man had ever had sexual relations with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came back up. **17** Abraham's servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a sip of water from your jug."

18 "Drink, my lord," she replied, and quickly lowering her jug to her hands, she gave him a drink. **19** When she had done so, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have drunk as much as they want." **20** She quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw more water until she had drawn enough for all his camels. **21** Silently the man watched her with interest to determine if the LORD had made his journey successful or not.

22 After the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels and gave them to her. **23**

"Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "Tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom Milcah bore to Nahor. **25** We have plenty of straw and feed," she added, "and room for you to spend the night."

26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD, **27** saying "Praised be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his faithful love for my master! The LORD has led me to the house of my master's relatives!"

28 The young woman ran and told her mother's household all about these things. **29** (Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban.) Laban rushed out to meet the man at the spring. **30** When he saw the bracelets on his sister's wrists and the nose ring and heard his sister Rebekah say, "This is what the man said to me," he went out to meet the man. There he was, standing by the camels near the spring. **31** Laban said to him, "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD! Why are you standing out here when I have prepared the house and a place for the camels?"

32 So Abraham's servant went to the house and unloaded the camels. Straw and feed were given to the camels, and water was provided so that he and the men who were with him could wash their feet. **33** When food was served, he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I want to say." "Tell us," Laban said.

34 "I am the servant of Abraham," he began. **35** "The LORD has richly blessed my master and he has become very wealthy. The Lord has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. **36** My master's wife Sarah bore a son to him when she was old, and my master has given him everything he owns. **37** My master made me swear an oath. He said, 'You must not acquire a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, **38** but you must go to the family of my father and to my relatives to find a wife for my son.' **39** But I said to my master, 'What if the woman does not want to go with me?' **40** He answered, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you. He will make your journey a success and you will find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father's family. **41**

You will be free from your oath if you go to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from your oath.’ **42** When I came to the spring today, I prayed, ‘O LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you have decided to make my journey successful, may events unfold as follows: **43** Here I am, standing by the spring. When the young woman goes out to draw water, I’ll say, “Give me a little water to drink from your jug.” **44** Then she will reply to me, “Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels too.” May that woman be the one whom the LORD has chosen for my master’s son.’

45 “Before I finished praying in my heart, along came Rebekah with her water jug on her shoulder! She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’ **46** She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll give your camels water too.’ So I drank, and she also gave the camels water. **47** Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She replied, ‘The daughter of Bethuel the son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to Nahor.’ I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. **48** Then I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right path to find the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son. **49** Now, if you will show faithful love to my master, tell me. But if not, tell me as well, so that I may go on my way.”

50 Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “This is the LORD’s doing. Our wishes are of no concern. **51** Rebekah stands here before you. Take her and go so that she may become the wife of your master’s son, just as the LORD has decided.”

52 When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD. **53** Then he brought out gold, silver jewelry, and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave valuable gifts to her brother and to her mother. **54** After this, he and the men who were with him ate a meal and stayed there overnight.

When they got up in the morning, he said, "Let me leave now so I can return to my master." **55** But Rebekah's brother and her mother replied, "Let the girl stay with us a few more days, perhaps ten. Then she can go." **56** But he said to them, "Don't detain me - the LORD has granted me success on my journey. Let me leave now so I may return to my master." **57** Then they said, "We'll call the girl and find out what she wants to do." **58** So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Do you want to go with this man?" She replied, "I want to go."

59 So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, accompanied by her female attendant, with Abraham's servant and his men. **60** They blessed Rebekah with these words: "Our sister, may you become the mother of thousands of ten thousands!

May your descendants possess the strongholds of their enemies."

61 Then Rebekah and her female servants mounted the camels and rode away with the man. So Abraham's servant took Rebekah and left.

62 Now Isaac came from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. **63** He went out to relax in the field in the early evening. Then he looked up and saw that there were camels approaching. **64** Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel **65** and asked Abraham's servant, "Who is that man walking in the field toward us?" "That is my master," the servant replied. So she took her veil and covered herself.

66 The servant told Isaac everything that had happened.

67 Then Isaac brought Rebekah into his mother Sarah's tent. He took her as his wife and loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

1 Abraham had taken¹ another² wife, named Keturah.

Guzik - Genesis 25:1-34

Genesis 25 - Abraham's Death; Jacob and Esau

Born to Isaac

A. Abraham's latter life and death.

1. (1-4) Abraham marries again and has many children by Keturah.

Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephraim, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

2. (5-6) Abraham is careful to set Isaac apart as the child of promise.

And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

a. **Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac:** Abraham gave his wealth to Isaac and he gave the land God had promised to him to Isaac (**he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son**).

3. (7-11) Abraham's death and burial.

This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth.

There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.

And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

a. **Then Abraham breathed his last and died:** Abraham passes from the scene, being one of the most important men of the Bible. He is mentioned 70 times in the New Testament alone. Only Moses is mentioned more times in the New Testament (80 times).

b. **Died in a good old age, an old man and full of years:** Clarke gives a good eulogy of Abraham: "above all as a *man of God*, he stands unrivaled; so that under the most exalted and perfect of all dispensations, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he is proposed and recommended as the *model* and *pattern* according to which the faith, obedience, and perseverance of the followers of the Messiah are to be formed. Reader, while you admire the *man*, do not forget the *God* that made him so great, so good, and so useful.

Even Abraham had nothing but what he had received; from the free unmerited mercy of God proceeded all *his* excellences; but he was a *worker together with God*, and therefore *did not receive the grace of God in vain*. Go thou, believe, love, obey, and persevere in like manner."

4. (12-18) The life and descendants of Ishmael.

Now this is the genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. And these were the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These were the sons of Ishmael and these were their names, by their towns and their settlements, twelve princes according to their nations. These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

B. The children of Isaac: Jacob and Esau.

1. (19-26) The conception and birth of Jacob and Esau.

This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son.

Abraham begot Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.

And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

a. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: Even the son of promise does not come into the promise easily. It only comes through waiting and prayer. But the prayers of a husband for his wife have a special power.

i. Even so, it was some 20 years until they had children (Gen. 25:20, 26), and these were the only children born to Isaac and Rebekah.

ii. Jewish legends say Jacob and Esau tried to kill each other in the womb. Also, every time Rebekah went near an idol's altar, Esau would get excited in the womb, and when she would go near a place where the LORD was worshipped, Jacob would get excited.

b. So she went to inquire of the LORD: As Rebekah sought God, the LORD spoke to her regarding the sons within her womb.

i. It is good to desire that the LORD would speak to us, but we must realize we do not hear perfectly from God. We can

become far too confident in our ability to hear from the LORD, and forget that it is easy for us to stop listening when God wants to keep speaking. We may add to what the LORD is saying, or hear it clearly but misunderstand the timing or application of what the LORD says to us.

ii. In connection with God's eternal word (as is the case with Rebekah here), God gives a unique gift to *perfectly* listen, a gift given only in connection with the revealing of His written, eternal word.

c. **Two nations are in your womb:** What God says is simple. She has twins within her. The twins will each father nations. One shall be greater than the other, and the younger will be greater than the older.

d. **Indeed there were twins in her womb:** The truth of the unseen promise is fulfilled by something that could be seen. God's word was true. When the time came for them to be born, there were in fact twins in Rebekah's womb.

e. **And the first came out red:** Circumstances surrounding the birth of each child were responsible for their names. **Esau** refers to the hairiness of the first-born child. **Jacob** refers to the way the second born was holding on to the heel of his brother.

i. Additionally, the idea of a "heel-catcher" *meant* something in that day. It had the idea of "trickster," "con-man," "scoundrel," or "rascal." It wasn't a compliment.

f. **And the older shall serve the younger:** God chose to go against the normal way of the younger serving the older. In Rom. 9:10-13, Paul uses this choice of Jacob over Esau before their birth as an illustration of God's sovereign choice.

i. God's choice of Isaac instead of Ishmael seems more "logical" to us. Yet His choice between Jacob and Esau, regarding which one would be the heir of God's covenant of salvation, is just as valid, though it "seems" to make less sense.

ii. Paul points out God's choice was not based on the performance of Jacob or Esau.

The choice was made when they were *not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil*.

iii. God announced these intentions to Rebekah before the children were born (*The older shall serve the younger*), and repeated His verdict long after Jacob and Esau had both passed from the earth (*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated*, Mal. 1:2-3).

iv. Is it fair for God to love one and hate another, and to choose one and not choose another, before they are even born? We should regard the *love* and the *hate* God speaks of here as having to do with His purpose in choosing one to become the heir of the covenant of Abraham. In that regard, God's preference could rightly be regarded as a display of *love* towards Jacob and *hate* towards Esau. The real thought here is much more like "accepted" and "rejected" more than it is like our understanding of the terms "loved" and "hated."

v. "A woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, 'I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.' 'That,' Spurgeon replied, 'is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.'" (Newell in *Romans, Verse by Verse*)

vi. Our greatest error in considering the choices of God is to think God chooses for arbitrary reasons, as if He were sort of an "eeny-meeny-miny-moe" chooser. We may not be able to fathom God's reasons for choosing, and they are reasons He alone knows and answers to, but God's choices are not capricious.

2. (27-28) The different characters of Jacob and Esau.

So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

a. **Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man:** Like so many siblings in a family, Jacob and Esau were very different from each other in their

personality and tastes. And as is sometimes the case, each parent had a "favorite" child.

b. **Jacob was a mild man:** The Hebrew word for **mild** has the idea of "wholeness" instead of someone who is weak or effeminate. The Hebrew word *tam* (**mild**) is used of Job in Job.

1:8: *Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"*

3. (29-34) Esau sells his birthright to Jacob.

Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

a. **Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field:** Here, each son acts consistently with his own natural inclination.

Esau hunts and Jacob cooks.

b. **Sell me your birthright was of this day:** Jacob knew that the **birthright** was valuable and he wanted it. Passages like Deu. 21:17 and 1Ch. 5:1-2 tell us the *birthright* involved both a material and a spiritual dynamic. The son of the birthright received a double portion of the inheritance, and he also became the head of the family and the spiritual leader upon the passing of the father. In the case of this family the birthright determined who would inherit the covenant God made with Abraham, the covenant of a land, a nation, and the Messiah.

c. **I am about to die:** Esau's thought isn't that he is so hungry that he will die without food.

Instead, the idea is "I will die one day anyway, so what good is this birthright to me?"

d. **Swear to me as of this day:** Was this unfair of Jacob? Certainly, he is acting like a "heel-catcher." He is being a trickster or a rascal in taking advantage of his brother.

i. Jacob was guilty of scheming in the flesh to gain something God said was already his.

Yet we should remember the far greater blame is placed on Esau, who **despised his birthright**.

ii. Luther draws attention to an important fact: this was not a valid transaction, because Jacob was buying what was already his, and Esau was selling something that didn't belong to him. (Leupold)

e. **And sold his birthright to Jacob:** Why did Esau sell out? "History shows that men prefer illusions to realities, choose time rather than eternity, and the pleasures of sin for a season rather than the joys of God forever. Men will read trash rather than the Word of God, and adhere to a system of priorities that leaves God out of their lives. Multitudes of men spend more time shaving than on their souls; and multitudes of women give more minutes to their makeup than to the life of the eternal spirit. Men still sell their birthright for a mess of pottage." (Barnhouse)

i. What birthright might we despise? Eph.

1:3-14 shows us a treasury of riches ours by birthright in Jesus: every spiritual blessing, the blessing of being chosen in Jesus, adoption into God's family, total acceptance by God in Jesus, redemption from our slavery to sin, true and total forgiveness, the riches of God's grace, the revelation and knowledge of the mystery of God's will, an eternal inheritance, the guarantee of the indwelling Holy Spirit right now. Will we sell out this birthright for a night of television?

f. **Thus Esau despised his birthright:** Esau's character as a *fornicator* and *profane person* (Heb. 12:16) shows God was

entirely correct in choosing Jacob over Esau to carry on the birthright, even though Jacob was younger.

Though Esau's character was not the basis for God's choosing (He chose Jacob over Esau before they were born), Esau's character showed the ultimate wisdom of God's choice.

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2 She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. **3** Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. **1** The descendants of Dedan were the Asshurites, Letushites, and Leummites. **4** The sons of Midian were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah. **5** Everything he owned Abraham left to his son Isaac. **6** But while he was still alive, Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them off to the east, away from his son Isaac.

7 Abraham lived a total of 175 years. **8** Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man who had lived a full life. He joined his ancestors. **9** His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar, the Hethite. **10** This was the field Abraham had purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. **11** After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac. Isaac lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

12 This is the account of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham.

13 These are the names of Ishmael's sons, by their names according to their records: Nebaioth (Ishmael's firstborn), Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, **14** Mishma, Dumah, Massa, **15** Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. **16**

These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names by their settlements and their camps – twelve princes according to their clans.

17 Ishmael lived a total of 137 years. He breathed his last and died; then he joined his ancestors. **18** His descendants

settled from Havilah to Shur, which runs next to Egypt all the way to Asshur. They settled away from all their relatives.

19 This is the account of Isaac, the son of Abraham.

Abraham became the father of Isaac. **20** When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean.

21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was childless. The LORD answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. **22** But the children struggled inside her, and she said, "If it is going to be like this, I'm not so sure I want to be pregnant!" So she asked the LORD, **23** and the LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from within you. One people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

24 When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, there were twins in her womb. **25** The first came out reddish all over, like a hairy garment, so they named him Esau. **26**

When his brother came out with his hand clutching Esau's heel, they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the open fields, but Jacob was an even-tempered man, living in tents. **28** Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for fresh game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Now Jacob cooked some stew, and when Esau came in from the open fields, he was famished. **30** So Esau said to Jacob, "Feed me some of the red stuff – yes, this red stuff – because I'm starving!" (That is why he was also called Edom.) **31** But Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."

32

"Look," said Esau, "I'm about to die! What use is the birthright to me?" **33** But Jacob said, "Swear an oath to me now." So Esau swore an oath to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and lentil stew; Esau ate and drank, then got up and went out. So Esau despised his birthright.

1 There was a famine in the land, subsequent to the earlier famine that occurred¹ in the days of Abraham.²

Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines at Gerar.

Guzik - Genesis 26:1-35

Genesis 26 - Isaac Sins Like Abraham

A. Isaac repeats Abraham's mistakes.

1. (1-5) God proclaims the covenant to Isaac.

There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

a. **I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father:** In theory, it was possible for the covenant "die" with the passing of Abraham, but God was true to His word. The covenant God made with Abraham was not only unto Abraham, but unto all of his descendants also (Gen. 17:7-8). This fulfills a specific promise made in Gen. 17:19.

b. **Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge:** God says that He kept the covenant because of Abraham's obedience. Yet a close look at Abraham's life shows that his obedience wasn't complete or constant.

i. God can say this of Abraham because Abraham was declared righteous by faith (Gen. 15:6), and as far as God is

concerned, all He sees in Abraham is the righteousness of Jesus.

2. (6-9) Abimelech takes Rebekah because Isaac says she is his sister.

So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold." Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?"

And Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'"

a. **And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife"** : Isaac went from such a high spiritual experience (Gen. 26:1-5) to such blatant sin because of the weakness of his own flesh, and also because of the bad example of his father.

i. Peter, with his confession and wrong counsel to Jesus, is a perfect example of how sin can follow upon an outpouring of God's blessing. Well does 1Co. 10:12 say: *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

b. **Lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold**: The Bible doesn't teach we are bound by "generational curses," but it is often the case that the sins of the fathers are found in the children, because those sins of the flesh have been nurtured in that environment.

c. **There was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife**: When Abimelech saw this (the KJV has an interesting translation here, saying Isaac was *sporting with* Rebekah), he put two and two together and understood the true nature of their relationship.

3. (10-11) Isaac is rebuked by a pagan king, even as his father was.

And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

a. **He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death:** Even as God protected his father, even in the midst of sinful conduct, Isaac was protected.

B. Isaac's great prosperity.

1. (12-14) Isaac becomes wealthy, as Abraham was before him.

Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the LORD blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.

a. **Then Isaac sowed in that land:** Prosperity came to Isaac as the blessing upon his hard work. He probably received enough of an inheritance from his father that he did not have to work, but did nonetheless, and God blessed it.

2. (15-23) Isaac handles disputes concerning wells with the natives, until he moves to Beersheba.

Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his

father had called them. Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Then he went up from there to Beersheba.

a. **He called the name of the well Esek:** The first well was named "contention," because it made others jealous. The next well was named "opposition" for similar reasons. But the third well was named "roominess," because it was far enough away to not be a problem.

b. **Then he went up from there to Beersheba:** God used the conflicts to lead Isaac back to Beersheba, where Abraham had been before. God doesn't want us to live in contention and opposition, but they can be used by God to lead us to the place where He wants us to be.

i. Of course, none of this lessens the responsibility those who unjustly opposed Isaac had to God. God used their sinful contention against Isaac, but it was still sin.

3. (24-25) God again confirms His promise to Isaac for Abraham's sake.

And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there and called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

a. **For My servant Abraham's sake:** God keeps His covenant with us for Jesus' sake.

4. (26-31) The natives make peace with Isaac because the LORD is with him, just as happened with Abraham.

Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.'" So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

5. (32-33) God's blessing for Isaac in the form of a well.

It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

a. **We have found water:** Abraham was a man of altars, and Jacob would be a man of tents. But Isaac was a man of wells, and he knew God's constant provision. He also knew God could provide in many different ways, not just one.

6. (34-35) Esau marries and grieves his parents.

When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

a. **They were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah:**

Again, this shows Esau's character as a *fornicator* and *profane person* (Heb.

12:16).

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt;¹ settle down in the land that I will point out to you.² **3** Stay¹ in this land. Then I will be with you and will bless you,² for I will give all these lands to

you and to your descendants,³ and I will fulfill⁴ the solemn promise I made⁵ to your father Abraham. **4** I will multiply your descendants so they will be as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give them all these lands. All the nations of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using the name of your descendants.^{note} **5** All this will come to pass because Abraham obeyed me and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” **6** So Isaac settled in Gerar.

7 When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he replied, “She is my sister.” He was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” for he thought to himself, “The men of this place will kill me to get Rebekah because she is very beautiful.”

8 After Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelech king of the Philistines happened to look out a window and observed Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. **9** So Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, “She is really your wife! Why did you say, ‘She is my sister’?” Isaac replied, “Because I thought someone might kill me to get her.”

10 Then Abimelech exclaimed, “What in the world have you done to us? One of the men might easily have had sexual relations with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us!” **11** So Abimelech commanded all the people, “Whoever touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death.”

12 When Isaac planted in that land, he reaped in the same year a hundred times what he had sown, because the LORD blessed him. **13** The man became wealthy. His influence continued to grow until he became very prominent. **14** He had so many sheep and cattle and such a great household of servants that the Philistines became jealous of him. **15** So the Philistines took dirt and filled up all the wells that his father’s servants had dug back in the days of his father Abraham.

16 Then Abimelech said to Isaac, “Leave us and go elsewhere, for you have become much more powerful than

we are.” **17** So Isaac left there and settled in the Gerar Valley. **18** Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug back in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after Abraham died. Isaac gave these wells the same names his father had given them.

19 When Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and discovered a well with fresh flowing water there, **20** the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water belongs to us!” So Isaac named the well Esek because they argued with him about it. **21** His servants dug another well, but they quarreled over it too, so Isaac named it Sitnah. **22** Then he moved away from there and dug another well. They did not quarrel over it, so Isaac named it Rehoboth, saying, “For now the LORD

has made room for us, and we will prosper in the land.”

23 From there Isaac went up to Beer Sheba. **24** The LORD appeared to him that night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.” **25** Then Isaac built an altar there and worshiped the LORD. He pitched his tent there, and his servants dug a well.

26 Now Abimelech had come to him from Gerar along with Ahuzzah his friend and Phicol the commander of his army.

27 Isaac asked them, “Why have you come to me?

You hate me and sent me away from you.” **28** They replied, “We could plainly see that the LORD is with you.

So we decided there should be a pact between us – between us and you. Allow us to make a treaty with you **29** so that you will not do us any harm, just as we have not harmed you, but have always treated you well before sending you away in peace. Now you are blessed by the LORD.”

30 So Isaac held a feast for them and they celebrated.

31 Early in the morning the men made a treaty with each other. Isaac sent them off; they separated on good terms.

32 That day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well they had dug. "We've found water," they reported. **33** So he named it Shibah; that is why the name of the city has been Beer Sheba to this day.

34 When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, as well as Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. **35** They caused Isaac and Rebekah great anxiety.

1 When¹ Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he was almost blind,² he called his older³ son Esau and said to him, "My son!" "Here I am!" Esau⁴ replied.

Guzik - Genesis 27:1-46

Genesis 27 - Jacob Deceptively Gains the

Blessing of Isaac

A. Rebekah and Jacob plot to deceive Isaac.

1. (1-4) Isaac's deathbed request to Esau.

Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

a. **Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old:** Isaac believes his time has come to die, and this is his way of "settling his affairs," sort of a last will and testament. Although, Martin Luther calculated Isaac's age to be 137 at this point, he lived to be 180. He lived 43 more years.

b. **That my soul may bless you before I die:** Strangely, Isaac insisted on giving the blessing to Esau, the one God did not choose, who despised his birthright, and who has married pagan wives. It seems Isaac plainly operated in the flesh here, thinking only of the good food he received from Esau's hunting.

i. Actually, it seems Isaac acted more in the flesh in regard to his glorying in Esau's manly hunting prowess. He actually could not taste the difference between what Esau hunted in the field and what his wife Rebekah could prepare from the flock.

2. (5-10) Rebekah advises Jacob to deceive his father Isaac.

Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, Bring me

game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD

before my death.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves.

Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death."

a. **Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you:** Instead of trusting God to fulfill what He had promised in Gen. 25:23, she goes about to "do what is right" in the flesh. Good intentions don't justify acting in the flesh.

b. **I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves:** But again, Isaac is no less scheming than Rebekah. In the willfulness of his old age, he is determined to pass on the blessing to Esau, despite what the LORD has said and what the boys have shown with their lives.

i. The fact Isaac is trying to dispense the blessing secretly shows he knew what he was wrong. Sadly, in this house, no one trusted anyone else.

3. (11-17) Preparations are made for Jacob's deceptive attempt to steal the blessing.

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of

the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

a. **Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him:** Jacob, true to his name ("trickster" or "scoundrel"), is all too willing to go along with this plan. His only concern is whether or not it will *succeed*.

i. When we are willing to abandon the question of right and wrong, and when our only concern is "what works," we have bought into the modern idea of *pragmatism*, as much of the church has today.

b. **His father . . . Rebekah . . . Esau . . .**

Jacob: Significantly, at this point, each of these actors in this drama are in the flesh and not in the spirit. Even Esau, in agreeing to Isaac's plan to give him the birthright, disregarded his previous promise to allow Jacob to have the birthright.

i. The worst aspect of this all is they seem to regard the blessing as "magical," as something detached from God's wisdom and will. But the most Isaac can do is recognize God's call and blessing on Jacob. Only God can truly bestow the blessing. Esau could receive the blessing from Isaac a hundred times, but it only matters if God in heaven honors it.

B. Jacob receives the blessing Isaac intended for Esau.

1. (18-27a) Jacob lies to his father, pretending to be Esau.

So he went to his father and said, "My father."

And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?"

And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me."

Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said,

"The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, a. **I am Esau your firstborn:** Sometimes it is difficult to discern a lie, and whether it is sin or not comes back to the question of intent. But other times it is not difficult at all, and Jacob clearly lies here.

b. **Because the Lord your God brought it to me:** Jacob, the scoundrel, did not hesitate to bring in God as a party to his deception.

i. How can he do this? Simply because his only concern is "what works." Since he knows God wants him to have the birthright, he will justify any lie or sin he commits in the pursuit of the birthright and say he is making a stand for righteousness!

ii. Jacob probably used the promise and calling of God as an excuse for sin; he justified it to himself by saying his sinful conduct was fulfilling the promise of God.

c. **Are you really my son Esau?** Even under repeated questioning Jacob stayed confirmed in his lie. Partially, Jacob took advantage of his father's good nature. Isaac probably would not believe his Jacob would lie to him so repeatedly.

2. (27b-29) The blessing is given to Jacob.

And blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD

has blessed. Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons

bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

a. **And blessed him:** Isaac blesses Jacob as the spiritual head of the family. Isaac had the right to pass on this blessing related to the covenant of Abraham, not Ishmael. The son (Jacob or Esau) who received this blessing was able to pass it on to his descendants.

b. **May God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth:** The words of the blessing are filled with pictures of the LORD's rich bounty, and they echo some of the words of the covenant God made with Abraham.

c. **Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you:** Again, it is important to see it wasn't the bestowal of these words upon Jacob that made him blessed.

Instead, Jacob was blessed because God chose him long before (Gen. 26:23). What mattered is that *God* said *the older shall serve the younger* (back in Gen. 25:23), not that *Isaac* said **be master over your brethren**.

i. "The point is that the sovereign will of God is done, in spite of our or any other person's opposition to it." (Boice) C. Esau discovers the deception of Jacob.

1. (30-38) Esau's grief at discovering Jacob's deception.

Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me." And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him; and indeed he shall be blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me; me also, O my

father!" But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?" And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me; me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

a. **Isaac trembled exceedingly:** This phrase is very strong. It could be translated, "Isaac trembled most excessively with a great trembling." (Morris)

b. **Isaac trembled exceedingly:** Isaac was troubled because he knew he had tried to box God in, to defeat God's plan, and God had beaten him. He realized he would always be defeated when he tried to resist God's will, even when he didn't like it. And he came to learn that despite his arrogance against God's will, God's will was glorious.

i. Later, in Heb. 11:20, it says *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come*. Where was the faith? Here it is, after Isaac's attempt to thwart the will of God has been destroyed and he said of Jacob, "**and indeed he shall be blessed.**"

c. **He took away my birthright:** Both Isaac and Esau are grieved when they figure out what Jacob did, and *now* Esau is concerned about the birthright! Previously (in Gen. 25:22-34), he was willing to sell his birthright for a bowl of stew, and he *despised his birthright*. Now he wanted the material and political advantages of the birthright.

i. When he saw it as a spiritual birthright, Esau did not value the birthright, but now that he sees it in material and political terms, he wanted it.

d. **He took away my birthright:** Esau is also more than willing to rewrite history. Though he is right in accusing Jacob of acting true to his nature when he took the birthright from Esau the first time, he neglects to mention he sold the birthright for a bowl of stew, and he *despised his birthright*.

i. Esau cannot truly say that Jacob **took away my birthright**. Esau *gave* it away, and God is Lord over the birthright anyway.

e. **Bless me, even me also, O my father!**

This is more spiritual concern than we have ever seen in Esau, though even this is colored with material and political concern.

f. **Esau lifted up his voice and wept:** Esau's tears were the tears of frustrated selfishness, not of regret for his own sin and despising of his birthright.

i. *Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.* (Heb. 12:15-17) 2. (39-40) Isaac gives a limited blessing to Esau.

Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.

By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck."

a. **Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth:** Barnhouse (and others) indicate the "blessing" Isaac bestowed on Esau actually says, "*your dwelling shall be from the fatness of the earth.*" That is, Esau and his descendants would be desert-dwellers.

b. **You shall serve your brother:** Esau would be under Jacob, but not forever. The promise also was that Esau would **break his yoke from your neck.**

3. (41-46) Esau's anger; Rebekah makes plans for Jacob to flee.

So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?" And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

a. **Then I will kill my brother Jacob:** Esau's somewhat spiritual concern for the blessing of his father quickly vanishes in a bitter hatred of Jacob, a bitter hatred having murderous intent.

Esau planned to kill Jacob as soon as Isaac died, and this is a *comfort* to Esau.

i. Revenge is a comforting thought to those who feel they have been wronged like Esau.

If only Esau knew Isaac would live another 43 years!

ii. Perhaps Esau was going to test just how blessed Jacob was. His intention may have been to kill him in an attempt to defeat God's revealed will regarding the birthright.

b. **Stay with him a few days:** The **few days** Jacob was to stay with Laban and Rebekah's family in Haran will turn out

to be more than 20

years. Yet, God will fulfill His purpose in all of it.

c. If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?

Rebekah successfully maneuvered Isaac into telling Jacob to leave. "Rebekah's diplomatic victory was complete; but she would never see her son again." (Kidner)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Isaac¹ said, "Since² I am so old, I could die at any time.³ **3** Therefore, take your weapons – your quiver and your bow – and go out into the open fields and hunt down some wild game¹ for me. **4** Then prepare for me some tasty food, the kind I love, and bring it to me. Then I will eat it so that I may bless you before I die." **5** Now Rebekah had been listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau went out to the open fields to hunt down some wild game and bring it back, **6** Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father tell your brother Esau, **7** 'Bring me some wild game and prepare for me some tasty food. Then I will eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before I die.' **8** Now then, my son, do exactly what I tell you! **9** Go to the flock and get me two of the best young goats. I'll prepare them in a tasty way for your father, just the way he loves them. **10** Then you will take it to your father. Thus he will eat it and bless you before he dies."

11 "But Esau my brother is a hairy man," Jacob protested to his mother Rebekah, "and I have smooth skin! **12** My father may touch me! Then he'll think I'm mocking him and I'll bring a curse on myself instead of a blessing." **13** So his mother told him, "Any curse against you will fall on me, my son! Just obey me! Go and get them for me!"

14 So he went and got the goats and brought them to his mother. She prepared some tasty food, just the way his father loved it. **15** Then Rebekah took her older son Esau's best clothes, which she had with her in the house, and put

them on her younger son Jacob. **16** She put the skins of the young goats on his hands and the smooth part of his neck. **17** Then she handed the tasty food and the bread she had made to her son Jacob.

18 He went to his father and said, "My father!" Isaac replied, "Here I am. Which are you, my son?" **19** Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your firstborn. I've done as you told me. Now sit up and eat some of my wild game so that you can bless me." **20** But Isaac asked his son, "How in the world did you find it so quickly, my son?" "Because the LORD your God brought it to me," he replied. **21** Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come closer so I can touch you, my son, and know for certain if you really are my son Esau."

22 So Jacob went over to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's."

23 He did not recognize him because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau's hands. So Isaac blessed Jacob. **24**

Then he asked, "Are you really my son Esau?" "I am,"

Jacob replied. **25** Isaac said, "Bring some of the wild game for me to eat, my son. Then I will bless you." So Jacob brought it to him, and he ate it. He also brought him wine, and Isaac drank. **26** Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here and kiss me, my son." **27** So Jacob went over and kissed him. When Isaac caught the scent of his clothing, he blessed him, saying, "Yes, my son smells like the scent of an open field which the LORD has blessed.

28 May God give you the dew of the sky and the richness of the earth, and plenty of grain and new wine.

29 May peoples serve you and nations bow down to you.

You will be lord over your brothers, and the sons of your mother will bow down to you.

May those who curse you be cursed, and those who bless you be blessed."

30 Isaac had just finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, when his brother Esau

returned from the hunt. **31** He also prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Esau said to him, "My father, get up and eat some of your son's wild game. Then you can bless me." **32** His father Isaac asked, "Who are you?" "I am your firstborn son," he replied, "Esau!" **33**

Isaac began to shake violently and asked, "Then who else hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it just before you arrived, and I blessed him. He will indeed be blessed!"

34 When Esau heard his father's words, he wailed loudly and bitterly. He said to his father, "Bless me too, my father!"

35 But Isaac replied, "Your brother came in here deceitfully and took away your blessing." **36** Esau exclaimed, "'Jacob' is the right name for him! He has tripped me up two times! He took away my birthright, and now, look, he has taken away my blessing!" Then he asked, "Have you not kept back a blessing for me?"

37 Isaac replied to Esau, "Look! I have made him lord over you. I have made all his relatives his servants and provided him with grain and new wine. What is left that I can do for you, my son?" **38** Esau said to his father, "Do you have only that one blessing, my father? Bless me too!"

Then Esau wept loudly.

39 So his father Isaac said to him, "Indeed, your home will be

away from the richness of the earth, and away from the dew of the sky above.

40 You will live by your sword but you will serve your brother.

When you grow restless,
you will tear off his yoke
from your neck."

41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing his father had given to his brother. Esau said privately, "The time of mourning for my father is near; then I will kill my brother Jacob!"

42 When Rebekah heard what her older son Esau had said, she quickly summoned her younger son Jacob and told him, "Look, your brother Esau is planning to get revenge by killing you. **43** Now then, my son, do what I say. Run away immediately to my brother Laban in Haran.

44 Live with him for a little while until your brother's rage subsides. **45** Stay there until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I'll send someone to bring you back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am deeply depressed because of these daughters of Heth. If Jacob were to marry one of these daughters of Heth who live in this land, I would want to die!"

1 So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed him. Then he commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman!"
Guzik - Genesis 28:1-22

Genesis 28 - Jacob Flees From Esau

A. Isaac's farewell to Jacob.

1. (1-2) Instructions to not take a Canaanite wife.

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother."

a. **Isaac called Jacob and blessed him:** Perhaps now Isaac resigns himself to what his wife Rebekah told him was the LORD's will all along - that the older would serve the younger and that Jacob, not Esau, would receive the birthright. So he sent Jacob on with blessing and instructions.

b. **You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan:** It is essential Jacob *not* take a wife from the **daughters of Canaan**, as his brother Esau did. Jacob is the one who inherits the birthright and carries on the seed of the Messiah.

2. (3-5) The all-important transference of Abraham's blessing.

"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham." So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

a. **And give you the blessing of Abraham:** Essentially, this is the aspect of the birthright that Esau despised, but Jacob (who seems equally unworthy) will gain. Jacob is the one to carry on God's promise to Abraham.

i. Essentially, Jacob is promised a land, a nation, and a blessing, even as Abraham was (Gen. 12:1-3).

b. **To you and your descendants with you:** Jacob is by no means worthy of this blessing.

Each of the four parties in this whole birthright mess were in the flesh somewhere along the line. The amazing thing is that God could bring *any* good out of all this, and this is an example of a triumph of God's sovereignty.

c. **So Isaac sent Jacob away:** Tragically, this is the last time Jacob will see his father or mother.

3. (6-9) Esau adds wives.

Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

a. **Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob:** Now the blessing and the birthright seem important to Esau. They

were important enough to him that he determined to impress his father by marrying non-Canaanite women when he saw **that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother.**

B. Jacob meets God at Bethel.

1. (10-12) Jacob's dream of a ladder.

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set.

And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

a. **Then he dreamed:** In this desolate wilderness, Jacob had a significant dream as he used a stone for a pillow (which would seem to cause strange dreams).

i. One can only imagine the strange flood of feelings in Jacob at this moment: the fear, the loneliness, the isolation, the excitement, and the anticipation. This was an absolutely strategic time in Jacob's life.

b. **A ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it:** In Jacob's dream, there is now access to heaven. Jacob now knew God was closer than ever and there was real access and interaction between heaven and earth.

i. Jesus made it clear in Joh. 1:51 that *He* is the access to heaven. *He* is the means by which heaven comes down to us and by which we can go to heaven. *He* is the "ladder." *And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* (Joh. 1:51) ii. Jesus *is* this way to heaven. He does not show us a way, *He is* the way. *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.*

No one comes to the Father except through Me." (Joh. 14:6)
2. (13-15) God speaks to Jacob.

And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."

a. **The land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants:** These words are for comfort and hope in the life of Jacob, at this critical crossroads in his life. Essentially, God repeats to Jacob the terms of the covenant He gave to both Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) and Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5).

i. Before, Isaac told Jacob the covenant was his (Gen. 28:3-4), but now the voice of God Himself confirms it.

b. **I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac:** Jacob had no doubt heard about the great God who appeared to Abraham and to Isaac, but now this same God has a personal encounter with Jacob himself. This was a life-changing experience for Jacob.

c. **I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you:** God gives to Jacob the same kind of promise found in Phi. 1:6: *being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.* God won't let us go until His work is complete in us.

3. (16-19) Jacob worships God, naming the place **Bethel** (*house of God*).

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.

And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously.

a. **Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it:** Jacob was right in sensing the presence of the LORD there, but he was wrong in perhaps thinking God was in some places and not in others. David knew this: *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?* (Psa. 139:7) b. **How awesome is this place!** From his fleshly perspective, Jacob puts too much emphasis on a particular *place*. He doesn't realize that if the presence of the LORD is not with him in *every* place, then God can never fulfill His promise to him.

c. **He called the name of that place Bethel:** The city of **Bethel** plays an important (though not glorious) role in Israel's history. It is second only to Jerusalem in the number of times mentioned in the Old Testament.

i. Later, when speaking to Jacob, God refers to Himself as *the God of Bethel* (Gen. 31:13).

ii. Bethel would eventually become a high place, notorious for idolatrous sacrifice (1Ki. 13:32, Hos. 10:15, Amo. 4:4).

4. (20-22) Jacob's vow unto God.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's

house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

a. **If God will be with me:** This can be also translated "since God will be with me"; but knowing Jacob, he undoubtedly means it in the sense of " *if* God will be with me." God has given him a promise, yet he is still making "deals"

with God, even promising God money if He makes good on His promise.

i. The way Jacob prayed, it was evident God's mere word was not enough for him.

He had to see God do it before he would believe. Are we the same way? God says, " *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* " (Phi. 4:19); He says, " *The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knows those who trust in Him.* " (Nah.

1:7) Do we believe these things before we see them?

b. **Keep me in the way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on:** Here, Jacob sets the terms of his covenant with God. He is laying down the deal for God, instead of humbly receiving what God said would be the deal.

i. Jacob isn't very submitted to God. God will teach him submission in a very tough situation, through his Uncle Laban.

c. **Jacob made a vow:** Unfortunately, there is a great contrast between God's promise and Jacob's vow. One is totally God-centered; the other is terribly man-centered.

i. God's promise (Gen. 28:13-15): *I am the LORD God.*

1

I will give to you.

2

I am with you.

3

*I will not leave you until I have done what 4
I have spoken.*

ii. Jacob's vow:

- **If God will be with me.**
- **And keep me.**
- **In this way that I am going.**
- **Give me bread and clothing.**
- **So that I come back to my father's house.**

iii. How much better if Jacob had prayed like this: "Because You promised to be with me and to keep me and to provide for all my needs, and to bring me back to the land which you swore to give to my fathers and to me, I will be completely Yours, God."

iv. God is gracious enough to not call off the whole deal when He saw such a carnal response from Jacob. Instead, He is willing to be called, *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob* (Exo. 3:6).

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Leave immediately¹ for Paddan Aram! Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father, and find yourself a wife there, among the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother. **3** May the sovereign God¹ bless you! May he make you fruitful and give you a multitude of descendants!

2 Then you will become³ a large nation.⁴ **4** May he give you and your descendants the blessing he gave to Abraham so that you may possess the land God gave to Abraham, the land where you have been living as a temporary resident."note **5** So Isaac sent Jacob on his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean and brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him off to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. As he blessed him, Isaac commanded him, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman."

7 Jacob obeyed his father and mother and left for Paddan Aram. **8** Then Esau realized that the Canaanite women were displeasing to his father Isaac. **9**

So Esau went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael, along with the wives he already had.

10 Meanwhile Jacob left Beer Sheba and set out for Haran.

11 He reached a certain place where he decided to camp because the sun had gone down. He took one of the stones and placed it near his head. Then he fell asleep in that place

12 and had a dream. He saw a stairway erected on the earth with its top reaching to the heavens. The angels of God were going up and coming down it **13** and the LORD stood at its top. He said, "I am the LORD, the God of your grandfather

Abraham and the God of your father Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the ground you are lying on. **14** Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west, east, north, and south. All the families of the earth will pronounce blessings on one another using your name and that of your descendants. **15** I am with you! I will protect you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised you!"

16 Then Jacob woke up and thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, but I did not realize it!" **17** He was afraid and said, "What an awesome place this is! This is nothing else than the house of God! This is the gate of heaven!"

18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone he had placed near his head and set it up as a sacred stone. Then he poured oil on top of it. **19** He called that place Bethel, although the former name of the town was Luz. **20** Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God is with me and protects me on this journey I am taking and gives me food to eat and clothing to wear, **21** and I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will become my God. **22** Then this stone that I have set up as a sacred stone will be the house of God, and I will surely give you back a tenth of everything you give me."

1 So Jacob moved on¹ and came to the land of the eastern people.²

Guzik - Genesis 29:1-35

Genesis 29 - Jacob's Marriages and Children

A. Jacob meets Rachel.

1. (1-3) Jacob comes to a covered well.

So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

a. **And came to the land of the people of the East:**

Because the LORD blessed his trip, Jacob returns to the land that his mother came from, being also the land of his grandfather Abraham.

2. (4-10) Jacob meets Rachel at the well.

And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?"

And they said, "We are from Haran."

Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." So he said to them,

"Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." Then he said,

"Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them."

But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep." Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

a. **My brethren, where are you from?** In an age before clearly marked roads and signs, Jacob didn't know where he was until he asked some of the locals, and he discovered he was at his destination.

b. **Water the sheep, and go and feed them:** Jacob definitely seems like he is trying to get rid of the shepherd boys, probably so he can be alone with Rachel.

c. **Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth:** Jacob also knew he had come to marry one of the daughters of Laban (Gen. 28:2), so he is more than willing to show kindness (and perhaps his strength) to Laban's daughter Rachel.

3. (11-14) Rachel arranges for her father Laban to meet Jacob.

Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son.

So she ran and told her father. Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things.

And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

a. **Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept:** Initially, Rachel must have been quite surprised when a man she never saw appears before weeping and greeting her with a kiss. Yet she heard of her relatives (Rebekah is her aunt) who lived in the Promised Land, and she understood Jacob is from this family.

B. Laban's deal with Jacob.

1. (15-20) Jacob offers to work for seven years as a dowry to receive Rachel in marriage.

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?"

Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man.

Stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

a. **What should your wages be:** This might sound like a nice offer, but really Laban let Jacob know if he wants to stay around, he must stay as a hired servant. Jacob was the son of a man of tremendous wealth. Certainly he was not lazy, but he wasn't used to hard work.

Servants did the hard work back home. But now Jacob is the servant.

i. Jacob's reaction in this situation will reveal much of his character. This demonstrates the principle that you never know what kind of servant you are until others *treat* you like a servant.

b. **Now Jacob loved Rachel:** Not only was Rachel **beautiful of form and appearance**, but she was also the first friendly face Jacob met in the area. It is understandable why he had a "love at first sight" attachment to Rachel.

i. There is dispute as to exactly what the phrase "**Leah's eyes were delicate**"

means. Some think it means her eyes were bad, and she couldn't see well. Others think it means her eyes were "dull," not beautiful and full of life like her sister Rachel's eyes.

c. **I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter:** The offer to work for **seven years** was essentially a dowry. Though Jacob came from a family with great wealth, he left home penniless. Before he could take a woman in marriage he had to provide a dowry to

demonstrate he was fit to support a family and to compensate for the taking of the daughter.

i. **Seven years** was a very generous offer, far above a normal dowry. Jacob didn't want to risk a refusal. When Laban saw how badly Jacob wanted Rachel, he knew he could take advantage of him.

d. **They seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her:** We notice the great **love he had for her**. The seven years of labor without pay (except for room and board) seemed to pass as quickly as a few days.

i. In this ancient culture, Jacob was not allowed to spend as much time as he wanted with Rachel. There were strict social guidelines keeping unmarried men and women apart from each other.

ii. This clearly demonstrates an important principle: true love waits. Jacob was willing to wait **seven years** for Rachel.

iii. In 1990, it was reported that in response to the excesses of the sexual revolution, some 400 concerned single adults have joined the National Chastity Association.

Member Elaine Marsh, a 35-year-old legal secretary from Orange County, described her commitment to celibacy before her marriage: "It comes from my religion, but it's more than that," she says. "I just feel it's such a precious part of yourself, you don't give it to someone when you haven't made the commitment of marriage." Founder Mary Meyer says the group isn't against sex: "I love hand-holding, I love kissing, I love caressing, I love sex," she says. "But even more than I would love to experience these things right now, I want to be able to have a relationship where I can experience them forever." This is the kind of wisdom and heart Jacob had.

iv. In the 1990s there was a successful campaign among teens titled "True Love Waits." It persuaded them to take the following pledge: "Believing that true love waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, those I date, my

future mate and my future children to be sexually pure until the day I enter a covenant marriage relationship." One 18-year-old named Rick said he used to be one of the guys who would come into school on Monday morning and brag about his sexual exploits. His views changed when he became a Christian two years ago, and now he is happy to take the pledge. "Sex is something God made to say, 'I love you,'" he said. "If you have sex with everybody, you can't say I've saved this one thing to say, 'I love you.' "

2. (21-25) Laban switches Leah for Rachel on the wedding night.

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her."

And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?"

a. **Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her:** These words are clear enough. Even though Jacob waited and the time went quickly because of love, when the time was done he was done waiting.

b. **He took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her:** It was possible for Jacob to be fooled because of the wedding customs of the day. According to those customs the wife was veiled until she was finally alone with her husband in the "honeymoon suite." If it was dark by the time Jacob and his new bride were alone together (something Laban would not have difficulty arranging), it helps explain how Jacob was fooled.

c. **He took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob:** We assume that Leah was in agreement with this. "She may have loved Jacob secretly. She may have

considered this her one chance to get a husband. She may have thought this an unsought, and therefore justifiable, opportunity to steal a march on her sister." (Leupold) Yet even it she was not in agreement, she was under the absolute authority of her father.

i. The absolute authority of the father in the home in that culture also explains why Rachel "agreed" to this.

d. **So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah:** We can Imagine how Jacob felt - and how Leah felt, and of course how poor Rachel felt. All this was because of Laban's sin. Or, perhaps one should say it was because of *Jacob's* sin - now the deceiver is deceived.

e. **Why then have you deceived me?**

Significantly, Laban's deception towards Jacob is similar to the deception Jacob put upon his father Isaac and his brother Esau. This is an example of Jacob reaping what he had sown.

Jacob exchanged the younger for the older; Laban exchanged the older for the younger.

i. When Jacob deceived his father and cheated his brother, God did not change His plan to choose Jacob to receive the birthright. Instead, God took Jacob to the school of hard knocks to discipline him. This shows that our disobedience may not derail God's plan for our life, but it will greatly affect how we end up experiencing it. You may spend 20 years working for someone like Laban while God teaches you a few things.

ii. Though we can see this is God's correction upon Jacob, it in no way justifies Laban's deception. The fact God does work all things together for good never excuses the evil acts God works for good.

3. (26-30) Laban agrees to give Rachel to Jacob in return for another seven years worth of work.

And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.

Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

a. **It must not be done so in our country:** This excuse by Laban basically says, "Well, didn't we tell you? We don't do it this way around here. Thought you knew." The only reason Jacob submits to this clever trick of Laban's is because he had no other option. But Laban's "reason" was really nothing more than an excuse.

b. **Serve with me still another seven years:** The second seven years made up Jacob's post-graduate work in the school of hard knocks.

Jacob's "major" in the school of hard knocks was "You Reap What You Sow."

c. **And he served with Laban still another seven years:** Laban is a perfect picture of a deceptive manipulator. He ends up getting exactly what he wanted (both his daughters married). Yet, this will turn out badly for both himself and his daughters. Oftentimes, God judges manipulators by giving them what they in their sinful desires and methods want and allowing it to be loss for them.

i. The problems in this family can be seen immediately. Not only has Jacob married two sisters, but he also lets everyone know one is favored and loved more than the other.

Ultimately, all these problems stem from Laban's manipulative deception, and the prior sin of Jacob that brought it upon himself.

ii. Well, then, what should Jacob have done?

Some say Jacob should have gone to Laban and told him to correct the whole mess, and simply be married to Rachel and let Leah be Laban's problem. Others believe that according

to the standards of the culture, he could not have put Leah aside, because she was unable to marry another after having been given to Jacob. Perhaps, he should have done the best he could in the situation, which would have been to love his two wives equally. What a mess!

d. **He gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also:** We don't practice polygamy, but we do practice "serial marriage." We can think of polygamy as "mass marriage" in the sense we speak about "mass murder": someone who marries more than one at the same time. But there is also "serial murder": where a murderer kills many, but one at a time. In our modern culture we multiply wives to ourselves; we just do it one at a time.

i. We can't do anything about our marriages that have broken up in the past, but we can do all we can before God to make sure that from now on, it is one partner for all time.

C. Jacob's first four sons born through Leah.

1. (31) God's gracious love for Leah.

When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.

a. **When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved:** God's compassion on Leah is touching. She is truly the innocent party in all of this mess. God can minister to a wife and meet her needs even when the husband acts in an ungodly manner.

i. "Wretched Leah sits sadly in her tent with her maid and spends her time spinning and weeping. For the rest of the household, and especially Rachel, despises her because she has been scorned by her husband, who prefers Rachel and is desperately in love with Rachel alone. She is not beautiful, not pleasing. No, she is odious and hated . . .

There the poor girl sits; no one pays any attention to her. Rachel gives herself airs before; she does not deign to look at her. 'I am the lady of the house,' she thinks, 'Leah is a slave.' These are truly carnal things in the saintly fathers and mothers, like the things that usually happen in our

houses." (Luther, cited in Boice) b. **When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb:** Isa. 54:5

says, *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name.* God can meet the needs a hurting wife has, needs that are neglected by the husband.

2. (32) The birth of Reuben.

So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me."

a. **She called his name Rueben:** The first child born to Jacob, through Leah, is named **Reuben** by Leah, meaning "behold, a son."

This is her statement to Jacob and all others that the LORD had **looked upon my affliction.**

i. Reuben is the firstborn son of Jacob; he is the logical one to inherit the promise God had made to Abraham and passed on to Isaac and then to Jacob.

b. **Now therefore, my husband will love me:** Jacob, even though he did not love Leah, still would have sex with her. Unfortunately, men are much more able to detach sex from love than women are. Worse yet, Leah was painfully aware of the fact Jacob did not love her, even though he was obviously having sex with her.

3. (33) The birth of Simeon.

Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon.

a. **She called his name Simeon:** The second child born to Jacob, through Leah again, is named by Leah *Simeon*, meaning "hearing."

Leah hopes all will notice the LORD has heard her.

b. **Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved:** Apparently, the birth of Reuben did not turn the heart of

Jacob towards Leah. She is still aware he does not love her, though he is still having sex with her.

i. Of course, Jacob and Leah were married, so there was nothing sinful in sexual relationship. But this plainly shows that Jacob, like most any man in the flesh, was able and willing to have sex with someone he did not love.

ii. Women should never think a man loves them just because they have sex. A 1993

Los Angeles Times article interviewed young men to find out their views on sex. One man named Christian (17 years old) explained how things work between men and women: "We're just not sentimental. That's why we're men . . . We like girls, we don't love them . . . You see a girl and you just think, yeah, she's really pretty and the first thing that comes to mind is you want to have sex." He then explained how he seduced a girl: "You start kissing her and hugging her and little by little you start touching her."

After sex, he explained many boys dump the girls. "Girls get mad, but they don't take it hard. They get over it."

iii. This is the kind of man a woman might have sex with in the misguided effort to keep him as her boyfriend, because he has deceived her into thinking he loves her. How dangerous can this be? Consider the words of a woman who caught AIDS from a Ventura man who knew he was infected but never told her: "All I wanted is someone to love me, and now I'm going to die for that. I don't think I should have to die for that."

iv. A 1995 survey asked the following question: "Have you ever had sex with a woman you have actively disliked?" 58% of men answered "yes."

4. (34) The birth of Levi.

She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons."

Therefore his name was called Levi.

a. **Therefore his name was called Levi:** The third child born to Jacob, again through Leah, is named **Levi**, meaning "attachment." Leah still lives in the hope her husband Jacob will love her and become attached to her through the birth of these sons.

b. **Now this time my husband will become attached to me:** The pain in the heart of Leah is as evident as the hardness of Jacob's heart, and as evident as his fleshly attitude towards his wife Leah.

5. (35) The birth of Judah.

And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

a. **She called his name Judah:** The fourth son born to Jacob, again through Leah, is named **Judah** meaning, "praise." Apparently, Leah has stopped naming her children to reflect the pain and longing in her heart. Now she focuses on God and can praise Him.

b. **Now I will praise the LORD:** To some extent, and for some period of time, Leah has allowed the LORD to meet her need, and she can now praise God! Leah knew the LORD better, driven to Him by the neglect of her husband.

i. Leah, though she was neglected by Jacob and despised by Rachel, had a great purpose in God's plan. The two greatest tribes came from Leah, not Rachel: Levi (the priestly tribe) and Judah (the royal tribe). And most importantly, the Messiah came from Leah, the uglier sister, who was neglected and despised, but learned to look to the LORD and praise Him.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He saw¹ in the field a well with² three flocks of sheep lying beside it, because the flocks were watered from that well. Now³ a large stone covered the mouth of the well. **3**

When all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds¹

would roll the stone off the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back in its place over the well's mouth.

4 Jacob asked them, "My brothers, where are you from?" They replied, "We're from Haran."note **5** So he said to them, "Do you know Laban, the grandson of Nahor?"

"We know him," they said. **6** "Is he well?" Jacob asked.

They replied, "He is well. Now look, here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep." **7** Then Jacob said, "Since it is still the middle of the day, it is not time for the flocks to be gathered. You should water the sheep and then go and let them graze some more." **8** "We can't,"

they said, "until all the flocks are gathered and the stone is rolled off the mouth of the well. Then we water the sheep."

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was tending them. **10**

When Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, and the sheep of his uncle Laban, he went over and rolled the stone off the mouth of the well and watered the sheep of his uncle Laban. **11** Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep loudly. **12** When Jacob explained to Rachel that he was a relative of her father and the son of Rebekah, she ran and told her father. **13** When Laban heard this news about Jacob, his sister's son, he rushed out to meet him. He embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban how he was related to him. **14** Then Laban said to him, "You are indeed my own flesh and blood." So Jacob stayed with him for a month.

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Should you work for me for nothing because you are my relative? Tell me what your wages should be." **16** (Now Laban had two daughters; the older one was named Leah, and the younger one Rachel. **17** Leah's eyes were tender, but Rachel had a lovely figure and beautiful appearance.) **18**

Since Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel, he said, "I'll serve you seven years in exchange for your younger daughter

Rachel.” **19** Laban replied, “I’d rather give her to you than to another man. Stay with me.” **20** So Jacob worked for seven years to acquire Rachel. But they seemed like only a few days to him because his love for her was so great.

21 Finally Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my time of service is up. I want to have marital relations with her.” **22** So Laban invited all the people of that place and prepared a feast. **23** In the evening he brought his daughter Leah to Jacob, and Jacob had marital relations with her. **24** (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) **25** In the morning Jacob discovered it was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What in the world have you done to me! Didn’t I work for you in exchange for Rachel? Why have you tricked me?” **26** “It is not our custom here,”

Laban replied, “to give the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn. **27** Complete my older daughter’s bridal week. Then we will give you the younger one too, in exchange for seven more years of work.”

28 Jacob did as Laban said. When Jacob completed Leah’s bridal week, Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. **29** (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.) **30** Jacob had marital relations with Rachel as well. He loved Rachel more than Leah, so he worked for Laban for seven more years.

31 When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, he enabled her to become pregnant while Rachel remained childless. **32** So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, for she said, “The LORD has looked with pity on my oppressed condition. Surely my husband will love me now.”

33 She became pregnant again and had another son. She said, “Because the LORD heard that I was unloved, he gave me this one too.” So she named him Simeon.

34 She became pregnant again and had another son.

She said, "Now this time my husband will show me affection, because I have given birth to three sons for him." That is why he was named Levi.

35 She became pregnant again and had another son.

She said, "This time I will praise the LORD." That is why she named him Judah. Then she stopped having children.

1 When Rachel saw that she could not give Jacob children, she¹ became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children² or I'll die!"

Guzik - Genesis 30:1-43

Genesis 30 - The Children Born to Jacob

A. Two sons born to Bilhah.

1. (1-4) Rachel, out of frustration, gives her maid Bilhah to Jacob in a "surrogate mother" arrangement.

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her.

a. **Give me children, or else I die!** Despite Rachel's great beauty, she also was near despair. No doubt, Leah often said, "If I only had my sister's beauty and the love of my husband as she does." And, no doubt, Rachel often said, "If I only had sons like my sister."

Beautiful or plain, we all have our problems.

Stop looking to how God deals with others and set your eyes on Him!

b. **Rachel envied her sister . . . Give me children, or else I die . . . Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel:**

The tension in this family is apparent. At least Jacob

saw the hand of God in the matter, even though he stated it to Rachel cruelly.

i. Can you imagine how vain Rachel was, knowing Jacob worked *14 years* with no pay out of love for her, and knowing Jacob would not have worked one day for Leah?

c. **Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her:** Much like Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham in a surrogate-mother type arrangement (Genesis 16), Rachel gives her maid Bilhah to Jacob.

i. **On my knees** refers to the custom where the husband impregnated the surrogate while the surrogate reclined on the lap of the wife, and how she might even recline on the wife as she gave birth. The symbolism clearly showed the child was legally the child of the mother, not the surrogate, who merely "stood in" for the wife both in conception and birth.

d. **She gave him Bilhah her maid as wife:** This does not mean that Jacob actually married Bilhah. It means Jacob did with Bilhah what a man should only do with his wife.

2. (5-6) The birth of Dan.

And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son."

Therefore she called his name Dan.

a. **She called his name Dan:** Jacob's fifth son, born to him through Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, is named by Rachel **Dan** meaning, "judgment."

Because of her own envy, she viewed this child born of the flesh as a victory and a vindication for her.

b. **God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son:** "Can a woman get so low that she will hit her sister over the head with a baby? Rachel did." (Barnhouse)

3. (7-8) The birth of Naphtali.

And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.

a. **She called his name Naphtali:** Jacob's sixth son, born to him through Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, is named **Naphtali** by Rachel, meaning "wrestle." Relationships in this home have broken down to the point where Rachel will openly acknowledge this "baby competition"

between her and her sister by naming the new baby *wrestle*.

b. **With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed:** This seems strange. How do two sons prevail over four? Perhaps she meant it in the sense that now Leah seemed to have stopped having children.

B. Two sons born to Zilpah.

1. (9-11) The birth of Gad.

When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad.

a. **She took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife:** Leah, who has stopped bearing children, figured she could use the same "surrogate mother" method to increase "her" number of children, so she gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob as Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob.

b. **She called his name Gad:** Jacob's seventh son, born to him through Zilpah, the maid of Leah, is named **Gad**, meaning "troop" or "good fortune"; the wives of Jacob are still using their children as pawns in a power struggle within the home.

i. Leah has apparently lost the peace she had when her fourth son was born; she no longer has the peace "praise" brings.

2. (12-13) The birth of Asher.

And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.

a. **So she called his name Asher:** Jacob's eighth son, born to him through Zilpah, the maid of Leah, is named **Asher**, meaning "happy"; Leah is more concerned about the status the child will bring her (**all the daughters will call me blessed**) than about the child himself.

C. Leah herself bears two more sons and a daughter.

1. (14-18) The birth of Issachar.

Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband?

Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?"

And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.

a. **Found mandrakes in the field:** The mandrake is a root, called "love-apples" in Hebrew. They were thought (and still are among some peoples) to increase fertility in women. Because Leah had the mandrakes, she knew Jacob would have relations with her, believing there was a greater likelihood she would become pregnant.

i. We don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological, or if it functioned more as a placebo. But under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to "work" in the case of Leah and Jacob.

Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (such as mandrakes), the real factor is His sovereign will (**God listened to Leah**).

b. **You have taken away my husband:** The hostility between Leah and Rachel is as obvious as it is painful. It must have been terrible living in a home where one wife believed the other had stolen her husband from her.

i. This confirms the wisdom of God's original plan, as expressed in Gen. 2:24: one man to be joined to one woman in a one-flesh relationship.

ii. "Is it any wonder that this family had a history of strife and bloodshed? Children reflect the atmosphere of the home." (Barnhouse)

iii. Later, Lev. 18:18 forbids the marrying of sisters, and this shows why!

c. **So she called his name Issachar:** Jacob's ninth son, born to Leah, is named **Issachar**, meaning "reward"; Leah saw this son as a reward from God because she was "generous"

enough to offer her maid to Jacob.

2. (19-20) The birth of Zebulun.

Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.

a. **So she called his name Zebulun:** Jacob's tenth son, born to Leah, is named **Zebulun**, meaning "dwelling." In the pain of her heart, she still waits for her husband to truly love her and live with *her*, and she hopes the sheer quantity of sons will win his heart to her.

3. (21) The birth of Dinah.

Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

a. **Afterward she bore a daughter:** Finally, after ten children, Jacob becomes father to a daughter through Leah, who is named **Dinah**.

Apparently, there was nothing symbolically significant in her name.

b. The ungodly competition has, in one sense, ended. Leah and the two maids will have no more children.

i. But the wives fought each other as in a poker game:

"I bid one wife, loved and beautiful."

"I bid one wife and four sons."

"I'll match your one wife and raise you a concubine and the concubine's two sons."

"I'll raise you another concubine and two more sons by her; plus two more sons on my own, and I'll throw in a daughter. I'll stand with one wife, one concubine, six sons, and one daughter." Nobody was the winner at this competition.

D. Rachel herself bears a son to Jacob.

1. (22) God's sovereignty over the womb.

Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

a. **And opened her womb:** The idea of God's sovereignty over the womb is a persistent theme in the Bible; God granted twins to Rebekah (Gen. 25:21); He opens the womb of Leah (Gen. 29:31), and closes the womb of Hannah (1Sa. 1:5). The purposes of God in opening one and closing the other may be completely unknowable, but God has His purpose.

2. (23-24) The birth of Joseph.

And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The LORD shall add to me another son."

a. **So she called his name Joseph:** The eleventh son born to Jacob, through Rachel, is named **Joseph**, meaning "may he add"; Rachel feels she has been "vindicated" by the birth of one son, but longs for more children to continue the competition with her sister Leah.

b. At this point, none would think this eleventh son would end up being the key son used to further God's redemptive purpose through this family. Yet Isa. 55:8-9 is true: *"For My*

thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

E. Jacob's agreement with Laban.

1. (25-27) Jacob knows it is time to go back to Canaan.

And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake."

a. **Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country:** Though Jacob was in Haran with Laban and his daughters for more than 14 years, he knew that he belonged in the land promised to him by God, through the covenant made with his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. After 14 years, Jacob still called the Promised Land **my country**.

b. **Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake:** Laban knows Jacob has been an invaluable worker for him. Laban says this knowledge was **learned by experience**.

Literally this means, "learned by divination."

Laban practiced occult divination and by this he knew the source of blessing.

2. (28-34) Jacob negotiates a deal with Laban to start building a flock of sheep and goats for himself.

Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when

shall I also provide for my own house?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.

So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me."

And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!"

a. **The spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages:** Jacob will take the **speckled** and **spotted** offspring, but will separate the currently speckled or spotted animals from the rest of the flock, so the odds are set against him. Allowing the speckled and spotted sheep and goats to remain in the flock would increase the likelihood of more speckled and spotted offspring coming from the flock at large.

b. **Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!"** This is an agreeable deal to both parties. First, it was a foolproof way to distinguish between the flocks of Laban and Jacob. As well, Laban liked the deal because the odds were stacked in his favor. Jacob may have proposed the deal because he was willing to trust in God.

3. (35-36) The agreement is made, and the flocks are separated.

So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

a. **Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks:** Jacob now will care for the large flock of his father-in-law Laban, made up of solid-colored animals, and Jacob will receive any speckled or spotted offspring of this flock. Obviously, if there was a way Jacob could encourage these solid-colored sheep to bring forth spotted and speckled offspring, it would greatly increase his personal wealth.

b. **He put three days' journey between himself and Jacob:** So there would be no mixing of the flocks, Laban's sons took care of all the existing speckled and spotted sheep and goats, keeping them a three-day journey from the main flock. Jacob himself would take care of the solid-colored flock of Laban, as well as their speckled and spotted offspring, which belonged to him.

4. (37-43) God blesses Jacob's method of breeding, and he greatly increases in wealth.

Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock. And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

a. **Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees:** When Jacob put these

branches in the the drinking troughs of the flocks it apparently increased the number of speckled and spotted offspring from the solid-colored flock Jacob managed on Laban's behalf.

b. **So the feeble were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's:** Jacob also used selective breeding to increase the strength and vitality of his flock. We don't know exactly how this method worked. It is possible Jacob knew more about animal husbandry than we do today; but it is more likely Jacob did the best he knew, and God blessed it.

c. **Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous:** The ancient Hebrew says, "the man burst out exceedingly exceedingly." God blessed Jacob, but it was not because Jacob was especially good. It was because of the promises God made to Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15) and the covenant made to Abraham. In the same way, blessing comes from the LORD to us, not because we are great or good, but because of the covenant God has made with us through Jesus, and promises He has given us in His word.

i. We may note Jacob's principles for prosperity:

- Don't make wealth your goal (Gen. 30:25-26)

- Don't be afraid to work for others and try to increase their wealth before or as you work to increase your own wealth (Gen. 30:27)

- Work hard, dedicating yourself to your employer's success (Gen. 30:26, 31:38-42) · Trust God (Gen. 30:31-33)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Jacob became furious¹ with Rachel and exclaimed, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"² **3** She replied, "Here is my servant Bilhah! Have sexual relations with¹ her so that she can bear² children³ for me⁴ and I can have a family through her."⁵

4 So Rachel gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob had marital relations with her.^{note} **5** Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son. **6** Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me. He has responded to my prayer and given me a son." That is why she named him Dan.

7 Bilhah, Rachel's servant, became pregnant again and gave Jacob another son. **8** Then Rachel said, "I have fought a desperate struggle with my sister, but I have won." So she named him Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she gave her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife. **10** Soon Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob a son. **11** Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad.

12 Then Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob another son.

13 Leah said, "How happy I am, for women will call me happy!" So she named him Asher.

14 At the time of the wheat harvest Reuben went out and found some mandrake plants in a field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Give me some of your son's mandrakes." **15** But Leah replied, "Wasn't it enough that you've taken away my husband?

Would you take away my son's mandrakes too?" "All right," Rachel said, "he may sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes." **16** When Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must sleep with me because I have paid for your services with my son's mandrakes." So he had marital relations with her that night. **17** God paid attention to Leah; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a son for the fifth time. **18** Then Leah said, "God has granted me a reward because I gave my servant to my husband as a wife." So she named him Issachar.

19 Leah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a son for the sixth time. **20** Then Leah said, "God has given me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.

21 After that she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

22 Then God took note of Rachel. He paid attention to her and enabled her to become pregnant. **23** She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Then she said, "God has taken away my shame." **24** She named him Joseph, saying, "May the LORD give me yet another son."

25 After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me on my way so that I can go home to my own country. **26** Let me take my wives and my children whom I have acquired by working for you. Then I'll depart, because you know how hard I've worked for you."

27 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, please stay here, for I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me on account of you." **28** He added, "Just name your wages - I'll pay whatever you want."

29 "You know how I have worked for you," Jacob replied, "and how well your livestock have fared under my care. **30** Indeed, you had little before I arrived, but now your possessions have increased many times over. The LORD has blessed you wherever I worked. But now, how long must it be before I do something for my own family too?"

31 So Laban asked, "What should I give you?" "You don't need to give me a thing," Jacob replied, "but if you agree to this one condition, I will continue to care for your flocks and protect them: **32** Let me walk among all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb, and the spotted or speckled goats. These animals will be my wages. **33** My integrity will testify for me later on. When you come to verify that I've taken only the wages we agreed on, if I have in my possession any goat that is not speckled or spotted or any sheep that is not dark-colored, it will be considered stolen." **34** "Agreed!" said Laban, "It will be as you say."

35 So that day Laban removed the male goats that were streaked or spotted, all the female goats that were speckled

or spotted (all that had any white on them), and all the dark-colored lambs, and put them in the care of his sons. **36** Then he separated them from Jacob by a three-day journey, while Jacob was taking care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 But Jacob took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees. He made white streaks by peeling them, making the white inner wood in the branches visible. **38** Then he set up the peeled branches in all the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink.

He set up the branches in front of the flocks when they were in heat and came to drink. **39** When the sheep mated in front of the branches, they gave birth to young that were streaked or speckled or spotted. **40** Jacob removed these lambs, but he made the rest of the flock face the streaked and completely dark-colored animals in Laban's flock. So he made separate flocks for himself and did not mix them with Laban's flocks. **41** When the stronger females were in heat, Jacob would set up the branches in the troughs in front of the flock, so they would mate near the branches. **42** But if the animals were weaker, he did not set the branches there. So the weaker animals ended up belonging to Laban and the stronger animals to Jacob.

43 In this way Jacob became extremely prosperous. He owned large flocks, male and female servants, camels, and donkeys.

1 Jacob heard that Laban's sons were complaining,¹
"Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father!
He has gotten rich² at our father's expense!"³

Guzik - Genesis 31:1-55

Genesis 31 - Jacob Flees From Laban to Canaan

A. Jacob's disputes with Laban and his sons.

1. (1-2) Contention with Laban's sons causes Laban to look differently at Jacob.

Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." And Jacob saw

the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before.

a. **Jacob has taken away all that was our father's:** It wasn't that Jacob had taken *anything* belonging to Laban. Rather, it was that his wealth was increasing in proportion to Laban's wealth. The problem wasn't that Jacob stole, it was that Laban's sons were filled with *envy*.

i. Envy will distort the truth. Jacob had not taken anything of Laban's, but envy will lie.

b. **The countenance of Laban . . . was not favorable toward him:** The envy of Laban's sons poisoned Laban's heart against Jacob.

Before, he was entirely pleased with the agreement.

i. Envy is bad not only on its own, but also for the company it keeps: *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? (1Co. 3:3) For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there (Jam. 3:16).*

ii. Instead, *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy (1Co. 13:4).*

iii. God wants to deliver us from envy: *For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another (Tit. 3:3).*

iv. Is envy a small sin? It put Jesus on the cross: *For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy (Mat. 27:18).*

2. (3) God tells Jacob to go back home.

Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you."

a. **Return to the land of your fathers:** Even if Jacob never knew it, God prepared him for this time. First, God gave him the *desire* to go back home (Gen. 30:25). Then his *present circumstances became unbearable*. Finally, the

LORD gave *personal direction* to Jacob. God often leads us in the same pattern.

b. **And I will be with you:** This confirmed the direction of God in Jacob's life.

3. (4-13) Jacob explains the situation and his plan to his wives.

So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,'

then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.'

And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "

a. **But the God of my father has been with me:** Even though Laban tried to cheat Jacob, God protected him all the time. We don't have to fear what man can do to us when God is on our side.

i. *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.*

What can man do to me? (Psa. 118:6) b. **You know that with all my might I have served your father:** This

shows Jacob knew his wives were aware of his righteous conduct and Laban's unfair treatment of him.

c. **I am the God of Bethel:** God told Jacob to go back to Bethel, back to the place where he first encountered the LORD in a personal way.

This is a way of returning to one's first love and first works (Rev. 2:4-5).

i. **I am the God of Bethel:** it is good for us to remember times and places where the LORD did great works for us, and met us in wonderful ways. As we remember them, God reminds us He is still the same God Who met our needs then and wants to meet our needs now.

d. **The Angel of God spoke to me in a dream:** Significantly, there is much more to what the LORD said to Jacob than what was reported in Gen. 31:3. Gen. 31:3 is completely true, but there was more to it than this simple bare word from the LORD.

4. (14-16) Leah and Rachel support Jacob in his desire to move back to Canaan.

Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

a. **Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?** Their support was significant. This is a huge undertaking, moving such a massive family so far. If not for the support of his wives, Jacob perhaps would not have done what the LORD had told him to do.

b. **Whatever God has said to you, do it:** This may be the first time in quite a while when the sisters Leah and Rachel agreed on anything.

They can agree in uniting against a common foe - their father Laban.

B. Jacob's flight from Laban.

1. (17-21) Jacob leaves without saying goodbye.

Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

a. **Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian:**

God has already told him to go and promised him safe passage. Jacob is clearly acting in the flesh, because has no need to be afraid of Laban or to sneak away.

i. "He could have announced his departure and gone in the glory of an army with banners. But fear made it impossible to reap the full measure of blessing. He sneaked away into the will of God instead of departing in triumph." (Barnhouse)

b. **Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's:** Rachel took her father's **household idols** (*teraphim*). She may have wanted them because perhaps she worshipped these idols and did not want to be without them. Perhaps she did not want her father to inquire of them, using them as tools of divination to catch them (as he may have previously done, Gen. 30:27).

Or perhaps it was because such idols were often used as deeds to property and she thought this she was taking her "inheritance."

i. Perhaps Rachel stole the teraphim simply to get back at her father, whom she felt had mistreated her, her husband, and her whole family. Jewish traditions say Rachel took the teraphim because she wanted to keep her father Laban from idolatry.

c. **Headed toward the mountains of Gilead:** It was nearly 300 miles from Haran to the mountains of Gilead, but the journey was longer and tougher psychologically for Jacob than anything else. He is leaving the place of safety, where he has lived in a comfortable servitude, to go to a place where God has called him, but dangerous enemies abound (like his brother Esau, who swore to kill him).

2. (22-24) Laban pursues and catches Jacob.

And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

a. **God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night:** God's speaking to Laban in a dream shows he had evil intention towards Jacob. God is protecting Jacob.

3. (25-29) Laban meets and confronts Jacob.

So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' "

a. **Why did you flee away secretly:** Laban first tried to shame Jacob with kindness ("We wanted to throw you a party!"). When that didn't work (we can only imagine the stony faces answering him), he did what most bullies do - he boasted of his ability to harm Jacob.

4. (30-35) Laban accuses Jacob of stealing his teraphim and searches for them.

"And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them. And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

a. **Why did you steal my gods?** Jacob, not knowing his beloved wife Rachel stole the **household idols**, proclaimed his innocence and pronounced a harsh curse on the thief, not knowing actually put a curse on his own wife.

b. **Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them:** Rachel learned the ways of deception well from her father. She succeeded in deceiving her father about the idols.

i. "Amid much that is sad and even sordid in this story . . . amid craft, deceit, and lying on almost every side, we cannot fail to see the hand of God overruling and making even the wrath of man to praise Him." (Griffith Thomas, cited in Barnhouse) 5. (36-42) Jacob rebukes his father-in-law Laban. Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and

your brethren, that they may judge between us both! These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it.

You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

a. **Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban:** It isn't hard to see these words building up in Jacob for 20 years. He has practiced this speech over and over again in his mind.

b. **What is my trespass?** How faithfully did Jacob serve Laban? It was an ancient custom that a shepherd could bring the torn carcass of a sheep to his owner, as evidence that he was brave enough to not let the wolf devour it or take it away, and thus the shepherd would be excused. But Jacob says he didn't even do this, and every animal that was attacked, he made good out of his own flock.

c. **Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me:** Jacob saw God's place in all this.

Unfortunately, nowhere does Jacob say, "He is *my* God."

C. Laban and Jacob make a covenant.

1. (43-50) Jacob and Laban make a covenant.

And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom

they have borne? Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day."

Therefore its name was called Galeed, also Mizpah, because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us; see, God is witness between you and me!"

a. **All that you see is mine:** Laban lays claim to all this that is already out of his hand. He says, "It **is mine**, but Jacob, out of the generosity of my heart, I'll let you have it."

b. **May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another:** In this covenant, Laban expresses how suspicious he is of Jacob. The idea of **Mizpah** ("watch") is "If you do wrong, God will see it and may He punish!"

i. "In effect, the pillar of Mizpah meant, 'If you come over on my side of this line, the pact is void and I will kill you.' The covenant breaker would need God to take care of him, because the other would shoot to kill." (Barnhouse) **Mizpah** was never meant to be a nice sentiment - despite what your "Mizpah coin" might say.

2. (51-55) A pillar of separation and a parting of their ways. Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his

brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

a. **I will not pass beyond this heap to you:** The best solution for Jacob's in-law problems is for him to separate from Laban. In fact, they erect a pillar to be a barrier between them.

i. There is wisdom in having some separation from in-laws. The Bible does say, *therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife* (Gen. 2:24), though the separation in Jacob's case is indeed extreme!

b. **Then Laban departed and returned to his place:** After a proper good-bye, Laban sees his daughters and grandchildren for the last time. "This is the last we hear of Laban in the Bible, and it is good that this is the end of him. Laban is of the world, and Jacob needed to be freed from this world in order to live wholeheartedly for the God of his fathers." (Boice)

i. Morris on Laban: "Rather than seeking to follow the truth of God's plan as witnessed by Jacob, he merely resented and coveted the blessing of God on Jacob. He finally ended up with neither. His life constitutes a sober warning to a great host of semireligious but fundamentally self-worshipping and self-seeking men and women today."

ii. So, Rachel and Leah were wrong to look to their father Laban for their *portion or inheritance* (Gen. 31:14) once they were married to Jacob. He now was their portion and inheritance. "Since you are saved and joined to Christ, appraise the world and ask, 'Is there yet any portion for me?' If you think there is, you are mistaken." (Barnhouse)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When Jacob saw the look on Laban's face, he could tell his attitude toward him had changed.¹

3 The LORD said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers¹ and to your relatives. I will be with you.”² **4** So Jacob sent a message for Rachel and Leah to come to the field where his flocks were.^{note} **5** There he said to them, “I can tell that your father’s attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me. **6** You know that I’ve worked for your father as hard as I could, **7** but your father has humiliated me and changed my wages ten times. But God has not permitted him to do me any harm.

8 If he said, ‘The speckled animals will be your wage,’ then the entire flock gave birth to speckled offspring. But if he said, ‘The streaked animals will be your wage,’ then the entire flock gave birth to streaked offspring. **9** In this way God has snatched away your father’s livestock and given them to me.

10 “Once during breeding season I saw in a dream that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled, and spotted. **11** In the dream the angel of God said to me, ‘Jacob!’ ‘Here I am!’ I replied. **12** Then he said, ‘Observe that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled, or spotted, for I have observed all that Laban has done to you. **13** I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the sacred stone and made a vow to me.

Now leave this land immediately and return to your native land.’”

14 Then Rachel and Leah replied to him, “Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father’s house? **15**

Hasn’t he treated us like foreigners? He not only sold us, but completely wasted the money paid for us! **16** Surely all the wealth that God snatched away from our father belongs to us and to our children. So now do everything God has told you.”

17 So Jacob immediately put his children and his wives on the camels. **18** He took away all the livestock he had acquired in Paddan Aram and all his moveable property that

he had accumulated. Then he set out toward the land of Canaan to return to his father Isaac.

19 While Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole the household idols that belonged to her father. **20**

Jacob also deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was leaving. **21** He left with all he owned. He quickly crossed the Euphrates River and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

22 Three days later Laban discovered Jacob had left. **23**

So he took his relatives with him and pursued Jacob for seven days. He caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. **24** But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and warned him, "Be careful that you neither bless nor curse Jacob."

25 Laban overtook Jacob, and when Jacob pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead, Laban and his relatives set up camp there too. **26** "What have you done?" Laban demanded of Jacob. "You've deceived me and carried away my daughters as if they were captives of war! **27**

Why did you run away secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me so I could send you off with a celebration complete with singing, tambourines, and harps? **28** You didn't even allow me to kiss my daughters and my grandchildren good-bye. You have acted foolishly!

29 I have the power to do you harm, but the God of your father told me last night, 'Be careful that you neither bless nor curse Jacob.' **30** Now I understand that you have gone away because you longed desperately for your father's house. Yet why did you steal my gods?"

31 "I left secretly because I was afraid!" Jacob replied to Laban. "I thought you might take your daughters away from me by force. **32** Whoever has taken your gods will be put to death! In the presence of our relatives identify whatever is yours and take it." (Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.) **33** So Laban entered Jacob's tent, and Leah's tent, and the tent of the two female servants, but he did not

find the idols. Then he left Leah's tent and entered Rachel's.
34

(Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them inside her camel's saddle and sat on them.) Laban searched the whole tent, but did not find them. **35** Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord. I cannot stand up in your presence because I am having my period." So he searched thoroughly, but did not find the idols.

36 Jacob became angry and argued with Laban. "What did I do wrong?" he demanded of Laban. "What sin of mine prompted you to chase after me in hot pursuit? **37**

When you searched through all my goods, did you find anything that belonged to you? Set it here before my relatives and yours, and let them settle the dispute between the two of us!

38 "I have been with you for the past twenty years.

Your ewes and female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten rams from your flocks. **39** Animals torn by wild beasts I never brought to you; I always absorbed the loss myself. You always made me pay for every missing animal, whether it was taken by day or at night. **40** I was consumed by scorching heat during the day and by piercing cold at night, and I went without sleep. **41** This was my lot for twenty years in your house: I worked like a slave for you – fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flocks, but you changed my wages ten times! **42** If the God of my father – the God of Abraham, the one whom Isaac fears – had not been with me, you would certainly have sent me away empty-handed! But God saw how I was oppressed and how hard I worked, and he rebuked you last night."

43 Laban replied to Jacob, "These women are my daughters, these children are my grandchildren, and these flocks are my flocks. All that you see belongs to me. But how can I harm these daughters of mine today or the children to whom they have given birth? **44** So now, come, let's make a formal

agreement, you and I, and it will be proof that we have made peace.”

45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a memorial pillar.

46 Then he said to his relatives, “Gather stones.” So they brought stones and put them in a pile. They ate there by the pile of stones. **47** Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 Laban said, “This pile of stones is a witness of our agreement today.” That is why it was called Galeed. **49** It was also called Mizpah because he said, “May the LORD watch between us when we are out of sight of one another.

50 If you mistreat my daughters or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one else is with us, realize that God is witness to your actions.”

51 “Here is this pile of stones and this pillar I have set up between me and you,” Laban said to Jacob. **52** “This pile of stones and the pillar are reminders that I will not pass beyond this pile to come to harm you and that you will not pass beyond this pile and this pillar to come to harm me. **53** May the God of Abraham and the god of Nahor, the gods of their father, judge between us.” Jacob took an oath by the God whom his father Isaac feared. **54**

Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his relatives to eat the meal. They ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain.

55 (32:1) Early in the morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters goodbye and blessed them. Then Laban left and returned home.

1 So Jacob went on his way and the angels of God¹ met him.
Guzik - Genesis 32:1-32

Genesis 32 - Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

A. Jacob hears of Esau's approach.

1. (1-2) Jacob meets the angels of God at Mahanaim. He realizes God is with him and he has angelic protection.

So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he

called the name of that place Mahanaim.

a. **This is God's camp:** Literally, Jacob observed he was in a *double camp*. He was not alone; God had a camp of angels with him at Mahanaim.

i. It was not as if God's angels just joined Jacob. They were with him the entire time.

Now Jacob could see God's angels with him and it provided great encouragement.

ii. Angels, though "higher" beings than us, are ordained by God to be our servants (Heb. 1:14) and they minister to us even as they ministered to Jesus (Mat. 4:11). In 2Ki.

6:15-17 Elisha's servant had his eyes opened to see the tremendous angelic host surrounding them.

iii. John Paton, a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands, told of how one night hostile natives surrounded his missions headquarters, intent on burning the Patons out and killing them. He and his wife prayed through the entire night, and when daylight finally came, their attackers all left. A year later, the chief of the tribe became a Christian, and Paton asked the man about that night. The chief replied, "Who were all those men you had with you there?" The missionary explained only he and his wife were there. The chief insisted he had seen hundreds of big men with shining garments and swords circling the mission headquarters, so the natives were afraid to attack (Billy Graham in *Angels, God's Secret Agents*, page 3). That night in the New Hebrides Islands, there certainly was a "double camp"!

b. **The angels of God met him:** This wonderful revelation of God's presence and care came after Jacob finally separated from Laban, the worldly man. Separation from the world brings greater insight to the believer.

2. (3-6) Jacob's message to Esau.

Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed

there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' ' Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him."

a. **Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother:** Jacob, seeking to reconcile with his brother (who 20 years before swore to kill him), first began by humbling himself and sending the message, " **your servant Jacob.**"

b. **I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants:** Jacob isn't bragging. He wants Esau to know that he is a man of wealth and that he has not come to take anything from Esau. We see Jacob trying to get inside Esau's head and answer Esau's concerns.

c. **He also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him:** When the messengers return, Jacob heard news that made his blood run cold. Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Because Jacob could not bring himself to think the best of Esau (for understandable reasons), he was convinced the 400 men are an army intending to destroy him and his family.

3. (7-8) Jacob's fear and carnal preparation.

So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

a. **Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed:** When Laban confronted Jacob with a hostile militia Jacob boldly stood up to him and spoke his mind (Gen. 31:36-42). But with Esau, Jacob was afraid to meet him. This was because Jacob knew he was in the right with Laban, but he knew he was in the wrong with Esau.

Shakespeare was right when he wrote, "Conscience does make cowards of us all."

i. In a similar way many Christians are crippled by their past. Their past sin haunts them and they have difficulty believing that Jesus really settled it all and that He wants them to move on and trust in Him.

b. **Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed:** Before Jacob left home, after his brother swore to kill him, Rebekah told Jacob *until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there* (Gen. 27:45) .

Rebekah never sent for Jacob and therefore he had every reason to believe 20 years had not diminished his brother's anger.

i. But Jacob also had every reason to believe God would protect him. He seems to have forgotten God had a special camp of angels there to protect him. His great fear and distress is not appropriate for someone who is protected by God.

ii. Jacob should have said, "I don't know if Esau is coming to me in peace or in war. I hope for peace, but if it is war, I trust God will protect me."

c. **He divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies:** In splitting his company, Jacob used man's wisdom to prepare for Esau's coming. He should have trusted God could protect all he had. Jacob forgot about God's "two camps" and was tried to make his own "two camps."

4. (9-12) Jacob's prayer.

Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, 'I

will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

a. **Then Jacob said:** After first reacting in fear and unbelief, Jacob did the right thing. He went to the LORD and prayed a good prayer, full of faith, thanksgiving, and God's Word.

b. **The Lord who said to me, "Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you" :** Jacob's prayer had *God's word* (what God said in Gen. 31:3). He also quoted God's promise "**I will surely treat you well . . .** " (remembering what God said in Gen. 28:13-15).

i. Many of our prayers fall short because there is none of God's Word within them.

Often there is none of God's Word in them because there is little of God's Word in us.

Jacob *remembered* what the LORD had said to him.

c. **I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies:** His prayer had *thanksgiving*. Jacob understood he was not worthy of what God did for him or what he was asking God to do, but he relied on what God promised and not upon his own worthiness.

d. **Deliver me, I pray:** His prayer had *faith*. He boldly asked God to do something, and gave humble grounds for why the LORD should fulfill His word.

i. George Mueller, a great man of faith and prayer, was once asked what was the most important part of prayer. He replied: "The 15

minutes after I have said, 'Amen.' " No matter how great Jacob's prayer was, his faith will be seen in what he does *after* his prayer.

5. (13-21) Jacob sends many gifts to Esau.

So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going?

Whose are these in front of you?' then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.' " So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

a. **Took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother:** Jacob sent such an impressive gift because he wanted to make it completely clear to Esau that he did not need or want anything from him. It also could have been a carnal attempt to buy his brother's good favor.

b. **I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me:** In all likelihood, Jacob is a perfect example of the principle "when all else fails, pray." And as soon as he finished praying, he took up his own strategies again.

i. After all, if Jacob really trusted God, he would be at the *head* of the procession to meet Esau, not the *tail*.

ii. Jacob hoped, " **perhaps he will accept me,**" but in Jacob's mind, perhaps not.

Jacob also thought, "Perhaps he will kill me just like he said he would."

c. **So the present went on over before him:** This gift is a good example of the way we trust in our ability to do things and make things happen apart from trusting God. We

like to sing the song: *All to Jesus, I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live.*

I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

i. But we, so often like Jacob, mean, "I surrender all the goats. If that isn't enough, I surrender all the sheep. If that isn't enough, I surrender all the camels . . ." But what Jacob would not do is surrender *himself*.

B. Jacob wrestles with God.

1. (22-23) Jacob sends all his possessions over the river.

And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had.

a. **He took them, sent them over the brook:** This is a demonstration of his faith, because Jacob left himself no retreat. If Esau wanted to attack his group, they would quickly be backed up against the river.

b. **Sent over what he had:** Jacob spends the night alone. This is his last night on the east side of the Jordan, and he probably spent the night in prayer.

i. God had to get Jacob alone before He dealt with him. While all the hustle and bustle of the huge entourage was with Jacob, he could busy himself with a thousand different tasks. But once he was alone, God could command his attention.

ii. Think of all Jacob had to pray about: thanking God, remembering all the LORD did for him, wondering how God would fulfill His work in him. This was a significant turning point in Jacob's life and he knew it.

2. (24-25) A **Man** wrestles with Jacob.

Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him.

a. **A Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day:** Jacob didn't wrestle with the **Man**. Instead, **a Man wrestled with him**.

Jacob didn't start out wanting anything from God. God wanted something from him. God wanted all of Jacob's proud self-reliance and fleshly scheming and came to take it, by force if necessary.

b. **A Man wrestled with him:** As the following verses show, this was no mere man. This is another "special appearance" of Jesus in the Old Testament before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

This was God in human form.

c. **Until the breaking of the day:** We can only imagine what this scene looked like.

Perhaps sometimes it looked like a barroom brawl, and perhaps at other times it looked like an intense wrestling match.

i. "How did Jacob ever manage to keep up his struggle throughout the entire night? I do not know. But I do know that his determination to hang in there was no greater than our frequent determination to have our own way and eventually win out over God." (Boice)

d. **He saw that He did not prevail against him:** As the fight progressed, it seemed Jacob was pretty evenly matched against the **Man**. But the match was only even in appearance. The **Man** could have won easily at any time, using supernatural power.

i. Sometimes we feel man really *can* contend with God. A man or woman in rebellion against God might seem to do pretty well.

The "match" is even in appearance only.

God can turn the tide at any moment, and is allows the "match" to go on for His own purposes.

ii. It isn't hard to imagine Jacob working so hard and feeling he is getting the best of his "opponent," until finally the

Man turns the tide in an instant. Jacob must have felt very defeated.

3. (26) Jacob's plea to the **Man**.

And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

a. **Let Me go, for the day breaks:** The **Man** let Jacob know this won't go on forever. Even though Jacob clung to him desperately, Jacob has lost. A better, greater Man defeated Jacob.

i. This is an invaluable place for everyone to come to: where God conquers us. There is something to be said for every man doing his "wrestling" with God, and then acknowledging God's greatness after having been defeated. We must know we serve a God who is greater than us, and we cannot conquer much of anything until He conquers us.

b. **I will not let You go unless You bless me:** This wasn't Jacob dictating terms to God as he did on previous occasions. God did overcome Jacob here, and we know from Hos. 12:3-5

makes it clear: He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and in his strength he struggled with God. Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed; he wept, and sought favor from Him.

He found Him in Bethel, and there He spoke to us; that is, the LORD God of hosts. The LORD is His memorable name. Jacob sought this blessing with weeping. He knew he was defeated, yet desperately wanted a blessing from this Greater One.

c. **Unless You bless me:** According to his past, Jacob was always clever and sneaky enough so he never felt the need to trust in God alone.

Now he can *only* rely on the blessing of God.

i. Jacob has been reduced to the place where all he can do is hold on to the LORD

with everything he has. Jacob can't fight anymore, but he can hold on. Not a bad place to be.

ii. Here, God is answering Jacob's prayer in Gen. 32:9-12. But before Jacob could be delivered from the hand of his brother, he had to be delivered from his own self-will and self-reliance.

iii. Jacob thought the real enemy was outside of him, being Esau. The real enemy was his own carnal, fleshly nature, which had not been conquered by God.

4. (27-29) Jacob's name is changed, and he is a blessed man.

So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there.

a. **What is your name?** Jacob must have felt a sense of shame, admitting his name was "Jacob," meaning "con-man, sneaky, cheater."

Yet, this was *who he was*, and Jacob had to admit to it.

i. We all want to name ourselves favorably.

We say, "I am firm; you are obstinate; they are stubborn fools." God wouldn't allow Jacob to cover up his name.

b. **Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel:** The name **Israel** is a compound of two words: *sarah* (meaning, "fight," "struggle," or "rule") and *e/* (meaning, "God"). Some take the name Israel to mean, "He who struggles with God" or "He who rules with God." But in Hebrew names, sometimes God is not the object of the verb but the subject. *Daniel* means "God judges" not "he judges God." So this principle shows us **Israel** means, "God rules."

i. From this point on, he will be called **Jacob** twice as often as he is called **Israel**.

Apparently, there was still plenty of the "old man" left in Jacob.

c. **For you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed:** Jacob **prevailed** in the sense that he

endured through his struggle until God thoroughly conquered him. When you battle with God, you only win by losing and by not giving up until you know you have lost. This is how Jacob **prevailed**.

d. **Why is it that you ask about My name?**

The *Man* probably refused to tell Jacob His name because He figured Jacob should already know it, and it turned out that Jacob *did* know exactly who this was.

e. **And He blessed him there:** Surely, this was the blessing of being defeated by God. It was the blessing of the passing of the old (Jacob) life, and the coming of a new (Israel) life. It may also have had to do with the great idea of the blessing of Abraham, and meeting Jacob's immediate needs for security in the midst of fear. Whatever Jacob needed, God's blessing provided at the moment.

5. (30-32) The memorials of this event.

And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip.

Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

a. **Jacob called the name of the place Peniel:** The first memorial is a name. Jacob named the place **Peniel** ("Face of God"), because he *did* know the name of the *Man* who wrestled with him. He was the same One who wrestled with Jacob all his life.

i. Jacob also understood it was only by God's grace and mercy he escaped from this episode with his life. No man should be allowed to wrestle with God and live, but God was gracious.

b. **He limped on his hip:** The second memorial was a perpetual limp. Jacob would remember his being conquered by God with every step he took for the rest of his life. This was a small price to pay for such a great gift.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When Jacob saw them, he exclaimed,¹ "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Mahanaim.²

3 Jacob sent messengers on ahead¹ to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the region² of Edom. **4** He commanded them, "This is what you must say to my lord Esau: 'This is what your servant Jacob says: I have been staying with Laban until now.^{note} **5** I have oxen, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants. I have sent this message to inform my lord, so that I may find favor in your sight.'"

6 The messengers returned to Jacob and said, "We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you and has four hundred men with him." **7** Jacob was very afraid and upset. So he divided the people who were with him into two camps, as well as the flocks, herds, and camels. **8** "If Esau attacks one camp," he thought, "then the other camp will be able to escape."

9 Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, you said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives and I will make you prosper.' **10** I am not worthy of all the faithful love you have shown your servant. With only my walking stick I crossed the Jordan, but now I have become two camps.

11 Rescue me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, as well as the mothers with their children. **12** But you said, 'I will certainly make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand on the seashore, too numerous to count.'"

13 Jacob stayed there that night. Then he sent as a gift to his brother Esau **14** two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, **15** thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. **16** He entrusted them to his servants, who divided them into herds. He told his servants, "Pass over before me, and keep

some distance between one herd and the next.” **17** He instructed the servant leading the first herd, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘To whom do you belong? Where are you going? Whose herds are you driving?’ **18** then you must say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They have been sent as a gift to my lord Esau. In fact Jacob himself is behind us.’”

19 He also gave these instructions to the second and third servants, as well as all those who were following the herds, saying, “You must say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. **20** You must also say, ‘In fact your servant Jacob is behind us.’” Jacob thought, “I will first appease him by sending a gift ahead of me. After that I will meet him. Perhaps he will accept me.” **21** So the gifts were sent on ahead of him while he spent that night in the camp.

22 During the night Jacob quickly took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** He took them and sent them across the stream along with all his possessions. **24** So Jacob was left alone. Then a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

25 When the man saw that he could not defeat Jacob, he struck the socket of his hip so the socket of Jacob’s hip was dislocated while he wrestled with him.

26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” “I will not let you go,” Jacob replied, “unless you bless me.” **27** The man asked him, “What is your name?” He answered, “Jacob.” **28** “No longer will your name be Jacob,” the man told him, “but Israel, because you have fought with God and with men and have prevailed.”

29 Then Jacob asked, “Please tell me your name.” “Why do you ask my name?” the man replied. Then he blessed Jacob there. **30** So Jacob named the place Peniel, explaining, “Certainly I have seen God face to face and have survived.”

31 The sun rose over him as he crossed over Peniel, but he was limping because of his hip. **32** That is why to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew which is attached to the

socket of the hip, because he struck the socket of Jacob's hip near the attached sinew.

1 Jacob looked up¹ and saw that Esau was coming² along with four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants.

Guzik - Genesis 33:1-20

Genesis 33 - The Meeting of Jacob and Esau

A. Esau's warm welcome.

1. (1-2) Jacob's careful preparations.

Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last.

a. **He divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants:** These preparations were not necessarily carnal. Often the LORD leads us to do very practical things when we follow Him. But the placement of the family shows Jacob was not shy about showing his favoritism to Rachel and Joseph.

b. **He put the maidservants and their children in front:** At least Leah got more protection than the two **maidservants** Bilhah and Zilpah did.

2. (3) Jacob demonstrates his submission.

Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

a. **He crossed over before them:** The best thing about Jacob is now, after being conquered by God, he *leads* the procession coming to meet Esau.

b. **Bowed himself to the ground:** Jacob already sent over gifts and showed he didn't want to take anything materially from Esau. But by bowing down, he showed he is submitted to his brother and wanted no social power over him.

i. Of course, if Jacob didn't take things into his own hands more than 20 years ago this would not be necessary. Isaac's promise to Jacob, *Let peoples serve you, and nations*

bow down to you. Be master over your brethren (Gen. 27:29) would be more immediately fulfilled.

ii. We often simply mess things up when we try to "help God out" in the flesh. God never needs us to sin to help Him further His plan in our life.

3. (4-7) Esau warmly greets Jacob and his family.

But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.

a. **Esau ran to meet him:** This probably terrified Jacob. Surely, he thought his life would soon end. Instead, God was working in Esau, and he only wanted to bless Jacob.

b. **Fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept:** Esau and Jacob did not feel a need to "work out" the past. God worked in both their hearts and there was no need to dredge it all up again. What was past was past.

4. (8-11) Esau receives Jacob's gifts: **and he took it.**

Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me.

Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it.

a. **So he urged him, and he took it:** This was as important to the reconciliation as Jacob's giving the gifts.

When Jacob gave such generous gifts, it was his way of saying to Esau he was sorry and when Esau accepted the gifts, it was his way of accepting Jacob and saying he was forgiven.

i. In that culture, you never accepted a gift from an enemy, only from a friend. To accept the gift was to accept the friendship.

b. **I have enough . . . I have enough:** Both Esau and Jacob have a blessed testimony: **I have enough.** *Godliness with contentment is great gain* (1Ti. 6:6).

B. Jacob's travels in the Promised Land.

1. (12-17) Jacob and Esau part their ways; Jacob goes to Succoth.

Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you." But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir." And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord."

So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock.

Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

a. **Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant:** Jacob was glad to be reconciled with his brother, but didn't want to be too close to him. He was still afraid of Esau.

b. **Jacob journeyed to Succoth:** Unfortunately, Jacob still acts like "Jacob,"

because he said he will go far to the south with Esau to the area of Mount Seir. Instead, he allowed Esau to go a few days beyond him and then headed towards the north to Succoth.

i. It's hard to try to be Jacob and Israel at the same time. We could have called him *Jak-iel* or *Israe-ob*.

2. (18-20) Jacob comes to Shechem.

Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

a. **And he pitched his tent before the city:** It is good Jacob came to the Promised Land, and he settled there. But he falls short, because it seems God directed him to return to Bethel (Gen. 31:13).

b. **Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel:** Though he made an altar, it was obedience God wanted first, not sacrifice. Jacob will bear bad fruit and waste time because he is in a place he shouldn't be.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He put the servants and their children in front, with Leah and her children behind them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them.¹ **3** But Jacob¹ himself went on ahead of them, and he bowed toward the ground seven times as he approached² his brother. **4** But Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, hugged his neck, and kissed him. Then they both wept.^{note} **5** When Esau looked up and saw the women and the children, he asked, "Who are these people with you?" Jacob replied, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." **6** The female servants came forward with their children and bowed down. **7** Then Leah came forward with her children and they bowed down. Finally Joseph and Rachel came forward and bowed down.

8 Esau then asked, "What did you intend by sending all these herds to meet me?" Jacob replied, "To find favor in your sight, my lord." **9** But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother. Keep what belongs to you." **10** "No, please take them," Jacob said. "If I have found favor in your sight, accept

my gift from my hand. Now that I have seen your face and you have accepted me, it is as if I have seen the face of God.

11 Please take my present that was brought to you, for God has been generous to me and I have all I need." When Jacob urged him, he took it.

12 Then Esau said, "Let's be on our way! I will go in front of you." **13** But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are young, and that I have to look after the sheep and cattle that are nursing their young. If they are driven too hard for even a single day, all the animals will die. **14** Let my lord go on ahead of his servant. I will travel more slowly, at the pace of the herds and the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."

15 So Esau said, "Let me leave some of my men with you." "Why do that?" Jacob replied. "My lord has already been kind enough to me."

16 So that same day Esau made his way back to Seir. **17** But Jacob traveled to Succoth where he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was called Succoth.

18 After he left Paddan Aram, Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan, and he camped near the city. **19** Then he purchased the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent; he bought it from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of money. **20** There he set up an altar and called it "The God of Israel is God."

1 Now Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she bore to Jacob, went to meet¹ the young women² of the land.

Guzik - Genesis 34:1-31

Genesis 34 - Simeon and Levi Massacre Shechem

A. The rape of Dinah.

1. (1-4) A local prince violates Dinah and then wants to marry her.

Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country,

saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."

a. **Now Dinah the daughter of Leah:** This chapter contains one of the most shameful incidents in Israel's history. Leupold's homiletical suggestions on the chapter give us an idea of this: "We may well wonder if any man who had proper discernment ever drew a text from this chapter . . . It is rightly evaluated by the more mature mind and could be treated to advantage before a men's Bible class. But we cannot venture to offer homiletical suggestions for its treatment."

i. When the Bible shows its leaders and heroes in such terrible, stark truth, we can know for sure that it is a book from God.

Men don't write about themselves and their ancestors like this.

b. **Went out to see the daughters of the land:** Remember, Jacob brought his family to a place God didn't really want them to be. It seems God directed him to return to Bethel (Gen. 31:13), and his time spent in the city of Shechem did much harm to his family.

i. Jacob chose a place to live for all the wrong reasons. He wanted to be close to the city (Gen. 33:18), though the city was ungodly. God called him to Bethel. Jacob's poor choice of a place to live left his family open to ungodly influence.

c. **Went out to see the daughters of the land:** Dinah's desire to do this understandable but unwise. It is obvious Jacob did not make sure she was properly supervised. To allow her to socialize unsupervised in a pagan town was a real failure on the part of Jacob and Leah.

i. "Unattached young women were considered fair game in cities of the time, in which promiscuity was not only

common but, in fact, a part of the very religious system itself." (Morris)

ii. "This occurrence serves to illustrate the low standard of morals prevalent among the Canaanites. Any unattended female could be raped, and in the transactions that ensue neither father nor son feel the need of apologizing for or excusing what had been committed." (Leupold)

iii. But try telling this to a teenager like Dinah! Teenagers often want it all, and they want it now. It is almost impossible for them to see the benefits of waiting for certain things until they are more mature.

iv. A way this difficulty has been measured has been called the marshmallow test. A researcher gives this choice to a four-year-old: "I am leaving for a few minutes to run an errand, and you can have this marshmallow while I am gone, but if you wait until I return, you can have two marshmallows." Researchers at Stanford did this test in the 1960's, and a dozen years later they found the kids who grabbed the single marshmallow tended to be more troubled as adolescents. The one-marshmallow kids also scored an average of 210 points less on SAT tests. Learning to delay gratification is important!

d. Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her:

Jacob's lack of attention and protection was partially at fault in this tragedy.

His own compromise made him less able to stand up to his own children and guide them as he should.

i. Jacob's children knew he told his brother Esau he would go south with him, but Jacob went north instead. They picked up on this and other areas of compromise and used them to justify their own compromise.

e. He took her and lay with her, and violated her: As for the young man named Shechem, **his soul was strongly attracted** to Dinah and he even **spoke kindly** to her. Yet we cannot say he loved her, because **he violated her**.

i. It was a soulish love Shechem had for Dinah, not a spiritual or godly love. He loved her for what she could be and give to him, not for what he could be and give to her. His heart is shown in the words **get me this young woman as a wife**. It was a soulish "get me" kind of love.

ii. It is possible for a man to be attracted to a woman and to show kindness to her for reasons having nothing or little to do with love. In their desire to connect romantically with a man, women often forget this.

2. (5-7) Jacob's lack of outrage; the anger of Simeon and Levi.

And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done.

a. **Jacob held his peace until they came:** Jacob shows a distinct lack of outrage here. He seemed to take the defilement of his only daughter easily. His refusal to do what is right in regard to his family will encourage two of his sons to do *something*, something *ungodly* in response.

i. When God-appointed heads do not take appropriate leadership, it creates a void, which is often filled sinfully.

b. **The sons of Jacob . . . and the men were grieved and very angry:** In this culture, the brothers had a greater responsibility to protect their sister than the father. They will "protect"

Dinah's honor in unwise and sinful ways.

3. (8-12) Hamor and Shechem seek to arrange the marriage of Dinah.

But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to

us, and take our daughters to yourselves. So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it." Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife."

a. **Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves:** This was a dangerous challenge to Jacob and his family. Irresponsible intermarriage with the Canaanites could prove especially harmful for this family with such a destiny in God's redemptive plan.

b. **Whatever you say to me I will give:** Hamor and Shechem probably thought themselves generous. But their manner of negotiating the arrangement of the marriage insulted Dinah and her family even more with a "just name your price" attitude. They acted as if money and marriage could make her disgrace go away.

4. (13-17) The counteroffer of Simeon and Levi: all the men of the city of Shechem should be circumcised.

But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us. But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."

a. **If every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you:** Hamor and Shechem agreed to such an extremem demand because because circumcision

was not only practiced among the Israelites - other ancient peoples also had the practice. Therefore they knew of the practice from the rituals of other nations.

b. **For that would be a reproach to us:** Simeon and Levi have evil intention in this plan.

Yet they cover it up with spiritual words, and used Dinah as a cover for their intended evil.

i. They felt justified because the men of Shechem treated their sister as a prostitute (Gen. 34:31), but they prostituted the sign of God's covenant for their own murderous purpose.

5. (18-24) Hamor and Shechem convince the men of the city to go along with the plan.

And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours?

Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

a. **Their words pleased Hamor and Shechem:** Despite the obvious sacrifice involved, Hamor and Shechem were **pleased** with this plan. Beyond the obviously deep attraction Shechem has for Dinah, they were also undoubtedly pleased to begin to marry into a family so large, wealthy, and influential.

b. **Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours?** It is amazing what men will do for both women and wealth. A whole city of men submits to circumcision so they can **take their daughters to us as wives** and take **their livestock, property, and every animal of theirs**.

B. Simeon and Levi destroy the city of Shechem.

1. (25) The massacre of the men of the city of Shechem.

Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.

a. **When they were in pain . . . each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males:** This was not only a brutal, deceptive act, but it also disgraced God's covenant of circumcision. Surely, with this clever act of violent deception, Simeon and Levi showed themselves to be the children of *Jacob* from a bitter, competitive home environment.

i. **In pain:** "Crudely performed, circumcision could be quite incapacitating, particularly after two or three days." (Kidner)

b. **Came boldly:** "The boldness with which they executed their foul plan shows the hardness of their hearts." (Barnhouse) 2. (26-29) They rescue Dinah and plunder the city.

And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses.

a. **They killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword:** Certainly, they justified this murder

and theft by saying they and their sister had been disgraced, but the punishment clearly does not fit the crime.

b. They plundered even all that was in the houses:

Simeon and Levi probably thought God blessed their murderous plans with great success.

3. (30-31) Jacob's reaction.

Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I." But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

a. You have troubled me by making me obnoxious:

Sadly, Jacob is only concerned with himself. There is no concern for God's righteousness or the death and plunder of innocents. This is *Jacob*, not *Israel* in action.

i. "Jacob! You brought that trouble on yourself. You passed your own deceitful nature into your boys. You set them a constant example of guile. They heard you lie to Esau at Peniel and start northwest after he went southeast. They saw your interest in the fat pastures when you pitched your tent in Shechem. You said nothing when Dinah was violated . . . Talk to God about your own sin before talking to these boys about theirs." (Barnhouse) **b. Should he treat our sister like a harlot?**

Simeon and Levi were correct that Dinah had been treated like a harlot. Yet, their reaction was certainly ungodly.

i. When Jacob was about to die, he prophesied over each of his 12 sons. This is what he said about Simeon and Levi: *Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place. Let not my soul enter their council; let not my honor be united to their assembly; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they hamstrung an ox. Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; and their wrath, for it is cruel! I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in*

Israel. (Gen. 49:5-7) He saw Simeon and Levi for who they were, but he rebuked them far too late.

ii. The prophetic word of God through Jacob proved true. God did in fact both divide the tribes of Simeon and Levi, and scatter them among Israel. But, significantly, the way it happened for each tribe was different. The tribe of Simeon, because of their lack of faithfulness, was effectively dissolved as a tribe, and the tribe of Simeon was absorbed into the tribal area of Judah. The tribe of Levi was also scattered, but because of the faithfulness of this tribe during the rebellion of the golden calf (Exo. 32:26-28), the tribe was scattered as a blessing throughout the whole nation of Israel. Both were scattered, but one as a blessing and the other as curse.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, who ruled that area, saw her, he grabbed her, forced himself on her,¹ and sexually assaulted her.² **3** Then he became very attached¹ to Dinah, Jacob's daughter. He fell in love with the young woman and spoke romantically to her.² **4**

Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Acquire this young girl as my wife."note **5** When Jacob heard that Shechem had violated his daughter Dinah, his sons were with the livestock in the field. So Jacob remained silent until they came in.

6 Then Shechem's father Hamor went to speak with Jacob about Dinah. **7** Now Jacob's sons had come in from the field when they heard the news. They were offended and very angry because Shechem had disgraced Israel by sexually assaulting Jacob's daughter, a crime that should not be committed.

8 But Hamor made this appeal to them: "My son Shechem is in love with your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife. **9** Intermarry with us. Let us marry your daughters, and take our daughters as wives for yourselves. **10** You may live

among us, and the land will be open to you. Live in it, travel freely in it, and acquire property in it.”

11 Then Shechem said to Dinah’s father and brothers, “Let me find favor in your sight, and whatever you require of me I’ll give. **12** You can make the bride price and the gift I must bring very expensive, and I’ll give whatever you ask of me. Just give me the young woman as my wife!”

13 Jacob’s sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully when they spoke because Shechem had violated their sister Dinah. **14** They said to them, “We cannot give our sister to a man who is not circumcised, for it would be a disgrace to us. **15** We will give you our consent on this one condition: You must become like us by circumcising all your males. **16** Then we will give you our daughters to marry, and we will take your daughters as wives for ourselves, and we will live among you and become one people. **17** But if you do not agree to our terms by being circumcised, then we will take our sister and depart.”

18 Their offer pleased Hamor and his son Shechem. **19**

The young man did not delay in doing what they asked because he wanted Jacob’s daughter Dinah badly. (Now he was more important than anyone in his father’s household.)

20 So Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, **21**

“These men are at peace with us. So let them live in the land and travel freely in it, for the land is wide enough for them. We will take their daughters for wives, and we will give them our daughters to marry. **22** Only on this one condition will these men consent to live with us and become one people: They demand that every male among us be circumcised just as they are circumcised. **23** If we do so, won’t their livestock, their property, and all their animals become ours? So let’s consent to their demand, so they will live among us.”

24 All the men who assembled at the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem. Every male who assembled at the city gate was circumcised. **25** In three days, when they

were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and went to the unsuspecting city and slaughtered every male. **26** They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the sword, took Dinah from Shechem's house, and left. **27**

Jacob's sons killed them and looted the city because their sister had been violated. **28** They took their flocks, herds, and donkeys, as well as everything in the city and in the surrounding fields. **29** They captured as plunder all their wealth, all their little ones, and their wives, including everything in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought ruin on me by making me a foul odor among the inhabitants of the land - among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. I am few in number; they will join forces against me and attack me, and both I and my family will be destroyed!" **31** But Simeon and Levi replied, "Should he treat our sister like a common prostitute?"

1 Then God said to Jacob, "Go up at once¹ to Bethel² and live there. Make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."³

Guzik - Genesis 35:1-29

Genesis 35 - Revival in Jacob's Life

A. Jacob returns to Bethel.

1. (1) God speaks to Jacob, calling him back to Bethel.

Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

a. **Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there:** The whole Shechem incident was because Jacob went to Shechem instead of Bethel, where he was supposed to be. We often end up in much difficulty and bring much difficulty to those around us, because we do not go where God tells us to go.

i. "The only cure for worldliness is to separate from it."
(Barnhouse) Jacob had to leave Shechem and go to Bethel.

ii. Genesis 34 does not mention God once, and is one of the most sordid chapters in Israel's history. Genesis 35 mentions God over and over again, more than ten times, plus 11 more times in names such as **Bethel** and **Israel**.

b. **Make an altar there to God:** This turning back to the Lord will especially have a good effect on the children of Jacob. This reminds us the best thing parents can do for their children is to be in God's will themselves.

i. As Jacob looked back on his walk with God, the first meeting with God at Bethel must have seemed like a high point. But to his credit, Jacob refused to think the best years of his life with God were behind him.

He returned to his first love - he returned to Bethel, and God blessed it.

2. (2-4) The cleansing of Jacob's family.

And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."

So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.

a. **Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves:** Jacob's family only got right with God after Jacob himself did. This again shows us the tremendous leadership role men have within the family. A man resisting God will see the same effect in his children. A man who gets right with God will see the effect in his family also.

i. Jacob's children kept **foreign gods** because their mother did. Rachel clung to the household idols of her father (Gen. 31:19). No matter how hard we try to teach our children godly conduct they will still do what we do.

b. **And change your garments:** This was important because "Throughout the Bible, garments symbolize

character. The inward life of the unregenerate is compared to a polluted garment." (Barnhouse)

i. Jude 23 gives the idea: *but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.* Eph.

4:22-24 gives a similar exhortation: *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

c. **And the earrings which were in their ears:** Apparently, the **earrings** also had a pagan connection. Though some "reason" could be made for keeping the **earrings**, they got rid of them nonetheless.

i. It is important for everyone to take stock of what they may have in their home that is ungodly or occultic, and promptly get rid of those things.

3. (5-7) God's protection of Jacob; he comes to Bethel.

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

a. **The terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob:** Obviously, it would be *fair* of God to leave Jacob to the consequences of his sinful lack of leadership in the family. Yet, God's grace covered Jacob even when his sin had made he and his family vulnerable.

b. **He built an altar there and called the place El Bethel:** Though Jacob had sinned, he *now* did what was right before God, despite the danger, trusting God's

protection. He might have justified a lack of obedience because of fear, but he trusted God instead.

i. It dangerous for Jacob to set out to Bethel but it was more dangerous for him to disobey God. The only thing to save him was a radical obedience to the LORD. No matter what the circumstances look like, the safest place is do the will of God.

4. (8) The death of Deborah, Rebekah's beloved nurse.

Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree.

So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.

a. **Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died:** We know nothing of this woman before this account; seemingly, she came with Rebekah as a companion when she came from Haran to marry Isaac. Obviously, she was a beloved member of the family, because they named the place where she was buried **Allon Bachuth**, which means "Oak of Weeping."

b. **Rebekah's nurse:** Many commentators assume for some reason, she came to be in Jacob's household, coming from his mother's household, but we do not know for certain if this is the case.

5. (9-15) God speaks to Jacob again at Bethel.

Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.

So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

a. **Then God appeared to Jacob again . . .**

and blessed him: When Jacob finally arrived at the place God told him to go, Jacob immediately found great blessing. God appeared to him, God blessed him, and God called him by his new name (**Israel**).

i. The reminder of the new name was important, because Jacob had been acting like Jacob instead of Israel. Yet, God wants to set his mind on what God made him. God does the same with us, reminding us who we are in Him. God wants us to remember and live in the great names He gives us.

b. **God appeared to Jacob again:** Relationship is restored. This is an excellent example of what it means to return to your first love, as in Rev. 2:4-5: Jacob *remembers* to go back to Bethel. He *repents* by getting rid of all the idols, and he *does the first works* by building an altar and worshipping God as before.

c. **The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land:** God granted Jacob a precious reminder of his place in God's great covenant, begun with his grandfather Abraham. In this, Jacob did not need to hear anything new from God. He just needed to be reminded of what was true, and encouraged to cling to it all.

d. **Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him:** Seemingly, God appeared to Jacob here in bodily form. God blessed Jacob remarkably after his return to his first love. Much blessing waits for us until we do what God tells us to do.

e. **He poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it:** Appropriately, Jacob performed sacrificial acts of worship to the God who has blessed him so much.

i. The idea of a **drink offering** is found often in the Bible. Exo. 29:40-41, Lev.

23:13, and Num. 15:5-7 show the drink offering was made with wine poured out in sacrifice before the LORD at His altar. Paul considered the pouring out of his life before God

to be like the pouring out of a drink offering at God's altar (Phi. 2:17; 2Ti. 4:6).

ii. Jacob's heart of worship shows *gratitude* towards God. When we look back on life, we should never have the attitude that says, "I was robbed." Instead our heart should say, "God has blessed." This will probably determine if we will be perfectly miserable or perfectly delightful as we get older.

B. The birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel.

1. (16-17) The birth of another son.

Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also."

a. **Rachel labored in childbirth:** There seems to be none of the contentiousness and competitiveness surrounding the birth of this last son, possibly because they are all older at this time, but more so because they are now in the Promised Land and it just isn't as important anymore.

b. **In childbirth:** We don't know how long Jacob stayed at Bethel, but it is possible this last child was conceived at this place where Jacob came back to his first love for the LORD.

2. (18) The naming of the last son.

And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

a. **She called his name Ben-Oni:** Rachel named this last child - who before would have been seen as a cause for rejoicing and victory in the competition with her sister - she named this child **Ben-Oni**, meaning "son of my sorrow."

i. Ultimately, this shows the futility of Rachel's competition with her sister Leah.

Now at the time of her final "victory," all she found was sorrow.

b. **But his father called him Benjamin:** Jacob wisely names the child **Benjamin**, which means "son of my right hand." Perhaps he rightly sensed the special place God had for this child, or perhaps he simply prized Benjamin so greatly because he was the final link between him and the woman he loved most.

c. **Benjamin:** The right side was associated with greater strength and honor, because most people are right handed. **Benjamin** (son of my right hand) therefore has the idea of "son of my strength" or "son of my honor."

i. The idea is expressed in passages like Exo.

15:6: *Your right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power; Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.*

ii. The LORD is our strength and honor, as in Psa. 16:8: *I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.*

iii. God's strength and honor are for us: *My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.* (Psa. 63:8) *Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me; You will stretch out Your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and Your right hand will save me* (Psa. 138:7).

iv. Jesus sits at the *right hand* of the Father, the position of strength and honor, and we sit there with Him! *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God* (Col. 3:1).

3. (19-20) The death and burial of Rachel.

So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

a. **Rachel died and was buried:** Rachel's death was in tragic fulfillment of the curse Jacob himself pronounced on the one who stole the idols of Laban (Gen. 31:32).

i. In Gen. 30:1, Rachel pleaded with Jacob, *Give me children, or else I die!* As it happened, both became true. She had children and died as a result.

b. **Jacob set a pillar on her grave:** This also shows that even when we get right with God and return to our first love it doesn't mean life becomes a bed of roses. There are constant challenges for us to trust God.

i. We cannot prize comfort more than getting right with God. For some, comfort is their idol - a false god they worship with constant pursuit and attention. Some only want a *comfortable* life, not a godly life. The symbol for some Christians is a Lazy-Boy recliner, not a cross.

4. (21-22a) Reuben's sin with his father's concubine.

Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.

a. **Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine:** Reuben was the firstborn.

We might expect the highest conduct from him, and might expect him to most seriously receive the covenant of his fathers. Yet, here he sinned in a most offensive way against his father and entire family.

i. However, we don't have to wonder about where this sinful conduct was bred. In this home so filled with strife, contention, competition, and the pursuit of the flesh, it was almost to be expected.

b. **Israel heard about it:** Through their sin, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi "disqualified"

themselves from the high calling of Abraham's blessing. It will be up to the fourth son, Judah, to bring forth the Messiah.

5. (22b-26) Jacob's 12 sons.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were

Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

a. **The sons of Jacob were twelve:** From what we have seen in the last few chapters, this is no "all-star team." "We are greatly amazed in reflecting upon the event as a whole that descendants of the worthy patriarch Abraham should almost immediately after his time already have sunk to the level upon which Jacob's sons stand in this chapter."

(Leupold) b. **These were the sons of Jacob:** It is actually a pretty messed-up family. God will use this family, but not because they are such great candidates, but because He has chosen them by His grace alone.

C. The death of Isaac.

1. (27) Jacob visits his father Isaac one last time.

Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt.

a. **Jacob came to his father Isaac:** More than 20 years ago, Jacob left his home thinking his father's death was at hand. Now, quite unexpectedly, he has the opportunity to see his father one last time before his death.

i. We should remember our times are in God's hands. We may expect a long or short life for others or ourselves and be quite wrong. Only God knows.

b. **His father Isaac:** There seemed to be nothing dramatic between Isaac and Jacob at this meeting. It was possible Isaac was incapacitated by old age.

2. (28-29) Jacob and Esau bury their father together.

Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

a. **His sons Esau and Jacob buried him:** The sons had already been brought together by God's hand. Now they work together again, united by the death of their father.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** So Jacob told his household and all

who were with him, “Get rid of the foreign gods you have among you.¹

Purify yourselves and change your clothes.² **3** Let us go up at once¹ to Bethel. Then I will make² an altar there to God, who responded to me in my time of distress³ and has been with me wherever I went.”⁴

4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods that were in their possession and the rings that were in their ears.

Jacob buried them under the oak near Shechem^{note 5} and they started on their journey. The surrounding cities were afraid of God, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

6 Jacob and all those who were with him arrived at Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan. **7** He built an altar there and named the place El Bethel because there God had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother. **8** (Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died and was buried under the oak below Bethel; thus it was named Oak of Weeping.) **9** God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Paddan Aram and blessed him. **10** God said to him, “Your name is Jacob, but your name will no longer be called Jacob; Israel will be your name.” So God named him Israel.

11 Then God said to him, “I am the sovereign God.

Be fruitful and multiply! A nation – even a company of nations – will descend from you; kings will be among your descendants! **12** The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you. To your descendants I will also give this land.”

13 Then God went up from the place where he spoke with him. **14** So Jacob set up a sacred stone pillar in the place where God spoke with him. He poured out a drink offering on it, and then he poured oil on it. **15** Jacob named the place where God spoke with him Bethel.

16 They traveled on from Bethel, and when Ephrath was still some distance away, Rachel went into labor – and her labor was hard. **17** When her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Don’t be afraid, for you are having another son.” **18** With her dying breath, she named him Ben-Oni.

But his father called him Benjamin instead. **19** So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). **20** Jacob set up a marker over her grave; it is the Marker of Rachel's Grave to this day.

21 Then Israel traveled on and pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eder. **22** While Israel was living in that land, Reuben had sexual relations with Bilhah, his father's concubine, and Israel heard about it.

Jacob had twelve sons:

23 The sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, as well as Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.

24 The sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

25 The sons of Bilhah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naphtali.

26 The sons of Zilpah, Leah's servant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

27 So Jacob came back to his father Isaac in Mamre, to Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. **28** Isaac lived to be 180 years old. **29** Then Isaac breathed his last and joined his ancestors. He died an old man who had lived a full life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

1 What follows is the account of Esau (also known as Edom).¹

Guzik - Genesis 36:1-43

Genesis 36 - The Family of Esau

A. Esau's separation from Jacob.

1. (1-5) The wives, sons, and daughters of Esau.

Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom.

Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

2. (6-8) The separation of Jacob and Esau.

Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.

a. **Their possessions were too great for them to dwell together:** Esau's cry to Isaac *Have you only one blessing, my father?* (Gen.

27:38) proved unfounded. Because he was a descendant of Abraham God blessed Esau, and blessed him in the only way he really cared about: materially.

B. The descendants of Esau.

1. (9) The Edomites descend from Esau.

And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir.

a. **Esau the father of the Edomites:** Edom and the Edomites are mentioned some 130 times in the Bible. They were an important group of "neighbors" to Israel.

- When the Israelites came through the wilderness to the Promised Land in the time of Moses, the Edomites refused them passage through their land (Num. 20:21).

This was a source of great discouragement for the nation (Num. 21:4).

- Even so, God commanded special regard for the Edomites among Israel: *You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother* (Deu. 23:7).

- In the days of Saul, Edom was made subject to Israel (1Sa. 14:47), and David established garrisons there (2Sa. 8:14).

But later, in the days of Joram, the son of Ahab, the Edomites became independent of Israel (2Ki. 8:16-22).

- Several of the prophets spoke about and against Edom, including Jeremiah (Jer.

- 49:17-18) and Ezekiel (Eze. 25:12-14).

- Herod the Great - the one who tried to kill the young child Jesus - was an Edomite.

From the time Islam conquered the Middle East, the region has been virtually unoccupied, except for a few Bedouins and military outposts. It has been brought to nothing, as Obadiah had prophesied (the entire book of Obadiah records an extended prophecy against Edom).

b. The Edomites in Mount Seir: The Edomites also held the rock city of Petra, which can only be reached through narrow, winding gorge. Petra was so defensible that it was said that a dozen men could protect Petra against a whole army.

2. (10-43) The descendants of Edom and the chiefs of the Edomites.

These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz.

These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah. These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah,

Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These were the chiefs who descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs. These were the sons of Seir the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. And the sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam. Lotan's sister was Timna.

These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. These were the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the water in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon. These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran. These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir. Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith. When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place.

When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.

And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

a. **These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau:** When we see the kings and chiefs among the descendants of Esau, we see more clearly what God meant when He said, *Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated* (Mal. 1:2-3 and Rom. 9:13). Esau was obviously a blessed man but he was hated and rejected in regard to being chosen for a critical role in God's plan of redemption.

i. "If God blesses so abundantly those who are not chosen, what is the magnitude of His blessings for those who *are* chosen? If nonspiritual people experience such outpourings of merely common grace, how great must the special grace of the regenerate be!" (Boice)

b. **She bore Amalek to Eliphaz:** Notable among this list is **Amalek**. From him came the Amalekites, notable enemies of Israel (Exo.

17:8-16; Deu. 25:17-19; 1Sa. 15:1-8).

i. In addition, the names of the descendants of Esau don't reflect a godly heart.

- **Dishon** (Gen. 36:21) means "gazelle"
- **Alvan** (Gen. 36:23) means "wicked"
- **Ithran** (Gen. 36:26) means "advantage"
- **Aran** (Gen. 36:28) means "mountain goat"

· **Baal-Hanan** (Gen. 36:38) - his name embraces the false god Baal.

c. **Jobab the son of Zerah:** "Many have supposed that *Jobab* is the same as *Job*, so remarkable for his afflictions and patience; and that *Eliphaz* . . . was the same who in the book of Job is called one of his friends: but there is no proper proof of this, and there are many reasons against it." (Clarke) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission

2 Esau took his wives from the Canaanites: **1** Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and granddaughter **2** of Zibeon the Hivite, **3** in addition to Basemath the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

4 Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, **note 5** and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

6 Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, all the people in his household, his livestock, his animals, and all his possessions which he had acquired in the land of Canaan and went to a land some distance away from Jacob his brother **7** because they had too many possessions to be able to stay together and the land where they had settled was not able to support them because of their livestock. **8** So Esau (also known as Edom) lived in the hill country of Seir.

9 This is the account of Esau, the father of the Edomites, in the hill country of Seir.

10 These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.

11 The sons of Eliphaz were: Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 Timna, a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz, bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

13 These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

14 These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon: She bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah to Esau.

15 These were the chiefs among the descendants of Esau, the sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, **16** chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These were the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah.

17 These were the sons of Esau's son Reuel: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs descended from Reuel in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

18 These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These were the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.

19 These were the sons of Esau (also known as Edom), and these were their chiefs.

20 These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who were living in the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, **21** Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the descendants of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 The sons of Lotan were Hori and Homam; Lotan's sister was Timna.

23 These were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

24 These were the sons of Zibeon: Aiah and Anah (who discovered the hot springs in the wilderness as he pastured the donkeys of his father Zibeon).

25 These were the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.

26 These were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

27 These were the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.

28 These were the sons of Dishan: Uz and Aran.

29 These were the chiefs of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, **30** chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chief lists in the land of Seir.

31 These were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king ruled over the Israelites: **32** Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom; the name of his city was Dinhabah.

33 When Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned in his place.

34 When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place.

35 When Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated the Midianites in the land of Moab, reigned in his place; the name of his city was Avith.

36 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place.

37 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth by the River reigned in his place.

38 When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place.

39 When Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadad reigned in his place; the name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab.

40 These were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families, according to their places, by their names: chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, **41**

chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, **42** chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, **43** chief Magdiel, chief Iram.

These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their settlements in the land they possessed. This was Esau, the father of the Edomites.

1 But Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed,¹ in the land of Canaan.²

Guzik - Genesis 37:1-36

Genesis 37 - Joseph Is Sold Into Slavery

A. Joseph's dreams.

1. (1-4) Jacob favors Joseph.

Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

a. **Joseph, being seventeen years old:** Thus begins one of the remarkable life stories of the Bible and all literature. "He was loved and hated, favored and abused, tempted and trusted, exalted and abased. Yet at no point in the one-hundred-and-ten-year life of Joseph did he ever seem to get his eyes off God or cease to trust him. Adversity did not harden his character. Prosperity did not ruin him. He was the same in private as in public. He was a truly great man." (Boice) i. Enoch shows the *walk* of faith, Noah shows the *perseverance* of faith, Abraham shows the *obedience* of faith, Isaac shows the *power* of faith, and Jacob shows the *discipline* of faith. Along these lines we could say that Joseph shows the *triumph* of faith.

Joseph never complained and he never compromised.

ii. Joseph is also a remarkably powerful picture of Jesus.

b. **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children:** These chapters stand out for the insight they give us into an obviously troubled family. From the beginning, we get the impression Joseph is sort of a pampered favorite of Jacob, who doesn't mind tattling on his older brothers at all.

c. **Also he made him a tunic of many colors:** Jacob's favoritism of Joseph was plain to all, including Joseph and his brothers. As an outward display of this, he gave Joseph a

tunic of many colors. This signified a position of favor, princely standing, and birthright. It was a dramatic way of saying he was the son to receive the birthright.

i. The real idea behind the ancient Hebrew phrase for "**tunic of many colors**" is that it was a tunic extending all the way down to the wrists and ankles, as opposed to a shorter one. This was not what a working man wore. It was a garment of privilege and status.

d. **They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him:** Jacob's favoritism of Joseph was an obvious source of conflict in the family. The brothers naturally **hated him** because the father favored him.

2. (5-8) Joseph's first dream.

Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

a. **Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more:** At best, Joseph showed a great lack of tact. Surely he knew how much his brothers hated to hear this dream, which set him above his brothers.

b. **Shall you indeed reign over us?** The brothers understand perfectly the meaning of the dream: one day Joseph would **reign over** them and **have dominion over** them.

i. Also relevant to this dream is the fact that it involves **sheaves** of wheat. Joseph's ultimate position of status over his brethren will have much to do with food.

3. (9-11) Joseph's second dream.

Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream.

And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

a. **Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers:** If Joseph was unwise in telling the first dream (knowing how irritating it was to his brothers) he was even more wrong sharing this second dream, especially because it set him not only above his brothers, but also set him above his father and mother.

i. Joseph seems to be afflicted with the sort of pride often apparent among the favored and blessed. He is so focused on how great his dreams are for *him*, he doesn't begin to consider how the dreams will sound in the ears of *others*.

ii. At this point, Joseph is a *contrast* to Jesus. Jesus wants us to be as He was on this earth: an "others-centered" person.

Joseph seems to fall short in this area.

iii. Though Joseph was wrong to tell these dreams, they certainly did come true. One may receive a wonderful message from God that He does not intend them to publish to others. Joseph showed a proud lack of wisdom here.

b. **Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?** This portion of Genesis possibly isn't in strict chronological order. Back in Gen. 35:16-20, Joseph's mother Rachel died.

This portion of Genesis seems to backtrack somewhat.

i. Probably, the transition point is in Gen.

37:2: **This is the genealogy of Jacob.**

This likely ends the record preserved by Jacob himself (who recounted the death of Rachel), and the next line begins the record preserved by Joseph himself. These same kinds of transitions are found in Gen. 5:1, 6:9, and 25:19.

c. **The sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me:** The idea of the stars, moon, and sun representing the family of Israel is repeated in Rev. 12:1. That passage speaks of Jesus coming from the nation of Israel.

B. Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery.

1. (12-17) Jacob sends Joseph to find his brothers keeping the sheep.

Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem?"

Come, I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am." Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem. Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks." And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

a. **To feed their father's flock in Shechem:** There seems nothing strange about this errand, except Joseph's brothers are in **Shechem**, a place where this family was influenced and harmed by worldly influences.

2. (18-22) Joseph's brothers plot to kill him.

Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.'

We shall see what will become of his dreams!"

But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." And Reuben said to

them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"; that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

a. **Look, this dreamer is coming!** It isn't hard to see how unwise it was for Joseph to tell his dreams in the way he did. It only made his brothers hate him. They derisively call him **this dreamer**.

b. **We shall see what will become of his dreams!** They decide to defeat Joseph's offending dreams by attacking him. Without intending to, they put Joseph's dreams to the ultimate test. If the dreams really were from God, they cannot be defeated by the hatred of the brothers.

c. **But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands: Reuben** - who at another time committed incest with his father's concubine - took a small measure of leadership as the eldest, figuring he could save Joseph from death and rescue him later.

i. Reuben could have simply rose up and said, "This is wrong! We can't do this!" He didn't because he wanted to do right by Joseph without alienating his brothers. His desire to be nice to everyone will fail to prevent a great evil. The good Reuben wanted to do (**bring him back to his father**) will not happen.

3. (23-28) Joseph is cast into an empty cistern and sold into slavery.

So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to

the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh."

And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

a. **They stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him:** The **tunic of many colors** was the sign of the father's special favor. The brothers must have had a perverse pleasure as they ripped it off Joseph, and it must have been particularly painful for Joseph to have it torn off him.

i. Each believer in Jesus Christ is given special assurance of the Father's favor.

Certainly, many spiritual enemies want to rip from the believer the assurance of the Father's favor.

b. **And they sat down to eat a meal:** The heartless character of these brothers is clear - they could eat a meal with Joseph nearby in the pit. They could sit down and enjoy food while their hearts were bent on murdering their brother.

i. Later, Gen. 42:21 describes the conviction of sin they ignored at that moment. In that passage the brothers said: *We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.* When Joseph was cast into the pit, he plead with his brothers, and they ignored his cries as they ate their meal.

ii. "A physicist could compute the exact time required for his cries to go twenty-five yards to the eardrums of the brothers. But it took twenty-two years for that cry to go from the eardrums to their hearts." (Barnhouse) iii. This is a shocking demonstration of the depravity of the human heart - but it isn't the last demonstration. For example, in 1995

Susan Smith deliberately drowned her own children and lied to the country about the children being kidnapped. We

usually think someone who committed such an act would be overwhelmed by remorse, but her ability to put on a false face about such a horrific crime shows how deceitful our hearts are.

c. The brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver: The account is so shocking as to be numbing.

We don't know if we should think more highly of Joseph's brothers because they decided to spare his life or less highly of them because they figured they could get rid of him and make a few bucks at the same time. Apparently they considered that their brother was only worth **twenty shekels of silver**.

i. It was **Judah** who said, "After all, he's our brother, so let's only sell him into slavery instead of killing him." And this was the son of Jacob who would become the ancestor of the Messiah.

4. (29-35) They cover their sin and lie to Jacob concerning Joseph's fate.

Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?" So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"

And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

a. **Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes:**

Reuben tore his clothes as an expression of utter horror and mourning because his weak stand for righteousness accomplished nothing. Joseph may as well be dead, because his father who loved him so would never see him again.

b. **We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?** This shows the cruelty of the sons of Israel was not directed only towards the favored son, but also towards the father who favored him. This was both a heartless way to bring the news and an unconscionable lie.

c. **Jacob tore his clothes:** This was an expression of utter horror and mourning because his loved son is gone. His grief is understandable, but his failure to see the truth of eternal life is not.

i. This is also a powerful illustration of the principle that if we *believe* something to be so, it may as well be. Joseph was not dead, but as long as Jacob believed he was, as far as Jacob was concerned, Joseph *was* dead.

In the same way, the Christian has in truth been set free from sin, but if Satan can persuade us we are under the tyranny of sin, we may as well be.

5. (36) Joseph ends up in the court of a high Egyptian official.

Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

a. **Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt:** Egypt was a large and thriving kingdom for at least a thousand years before Joseph came. The Egyptians were wealthy and had massive natural resources. They were educated and had no real enemies at the time. When Joseph came to Egypt, some of the pyramids already looked old and the Sphinx was already carved. But in God's eyes, the most impressive thing about Egypt was that Joseph was now there. "Though stripped of his coat, he had not been stripped of his character." (Meyer) b. **Sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an**

officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard: Even in the midst of this horror, God did not depart from Joseph. In some ways the story will get worse - and when it does, God will still be with Joseph. God is working not only for Joseph himself, but also for the larger purposes of God's redemptive plan.

i. We can thank God for His great plan.

- If Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt.

- If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar.

- If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape.

- If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison.

- If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh.

- If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams.

- If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.

- If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he never is made prime minister.

- If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region.

- If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine.

- If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family.

- If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came.

- If Jesus never came, you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** This is the account of Jacob.

Joseph, his seventeen-year-old son,¹ was taking care of² the flocks with his brothers. Now he was a youngster³

working with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives.⁴ Joseph brought back a bad report about them⁵ to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons¹ because he was a son born to him late in life,² and he made a special³ tunic for him. **4** When Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated Joseph and were not able to speak to him kindly. **5** Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him even more. **6** He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: **7** There we were, binding sheaves of grain in the middle of the field.

Suddenly my sheaf rose up and stood upright and your sheaves surrounded my sheaf and bowed down to it!" **8**

Then his brothers asked him, "Do you really think you will rule over us or have dominion over us?" They hated him even more because of his dream and because of what he said.

9 Then he had another dream, and told it to his brothers. "Look," he said. "I had another dream. The sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." **10**

When he told his father and his brothers, his father rebuked him, saying, "What is this dream that you had?

Will I, your mother, and your brothers really come and bow down to you?" **11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept in mind what Joseph said.

12 When his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, **13** Israel said to Joseph, "Your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I will send you to them." "I'm ready," Joseph replied. **14** So Jacob said to him, "Go now and check on the welfare of your brothers and of the flocks, and bring me word." So Jacob sent him from the valley of Hebron.

15 When Joseph reached Shechem, a man found him wandering in the field, so the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" **16** He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers.

Please tell me where they are grazing their flocks.” **17** The man said, “They left this area, for I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.

18 Now Joseph’s brothers saw him from a distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. **19** They said to one another, “Here comes this master of dreams!

20 Come now, let’s kill him, throw him into one of the cisterns, and then say that a wild animal ate him. Then we’ll see how his dreams turn out!”

21 When Reuben heard this, he rescued Joseph from their hands, saying, “Let’s not take his life!” **22** Reuben continued, “Don’t shed blood! Throw him into this cistern that is here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” (Reuben said this so he could rescue Joseph from them and take him back to his father.) **23** When Joseph reached his brothers, they stripped him of his tunic, the special tunic that he wore. **24** Then they took him and threw him into the cistern. (Now the cistern was empty; there was no water in it.) **25** When they sat down to eat their food, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead.

Their camels were carrying spices, balm, and myrrh down to Egypt. **26** Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? **27**

Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let’s not lay a hand on him, for after all, he is our brother, our own flesh.” His brothers agreed. **28** So when the Midianite merchants passed by, Joseph’s brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. The Ishmaelites then took Joseph to Egypt.

29 Later Reuben returned to the cistern to find that Joseph was not in it! He tore his clothes, **30** returned to his brothers, and said, “The boy isn’t there! And I, where can I go?” **31** So they took Joseph’s tunic, killed a young goat, and dipped the tunic in the blood. **32** Then they brought the

special tunic to their father and said, “We found this. Determine now whether it is your son’s tunic or not.”

33 He recognized it and exclaimed, “It is my son’s tunic!

A wild animal has eaten him! Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!” **34** Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned for his son many days. **35** All his sons and daughters stood by him to console him, but he refused to be consoled. “No,” he said, “I will go to the grave mourning my son.” So Joseph’s father wept for him.

36 Now in Egypt the Midianites sold Joseph to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh’s officials, the captain of the guard.

1 At that time Judah left¹ his brothers and stayed² with an Adullamite man³ named Hirah.

Guzik - Genesis 38:1-30

Genesis 38 - Tamar and the Sin of Judah

A. Tamar's widowhood and Judah's unfairness.

1. (1-5) Judah and his three sons.

It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and visited a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her and went in to her. So she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name Shelah. He was at Chezib when she bore him.

a. **Judah departed from his brothers . . .**

And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her: Through an ungodly and unwise marriage to a Canaanite woman Judah fathered three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

i. It isn't hard to see the sons of Israel rapidly being corrupted by their Canaanite neighbors, and what the future will bring if they continued in that land. God had a plan to bring them out.

b. Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite:

Judah, the fourth-born son of Jacob through Leah (Reuben, Simeon, and Levi were before him) had not yet distinguished himself as someone great among his brothers.

He was the one who suggested they sell Joseph into slavery (Gen. 37:26).

2. (6-7) Er's marriage to Tamar and his death.

Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him.

a. Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him:

We are never told what Er's wickedness was, but obviously it was bad enough that God brought immediate judgment upon him.

Growing up with a father from such a messed-up family and with a mother who was a Canaanite did not lead Er in a godly life.

3. (8-10) Onan's refusal to raise up offspring for Tamar.

And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also.

a. Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother:

According to the custom of levirate marriage (later codified into law in Deu. 25:5-10), if a man died before providing sons to his wife, it was the duty of his brothers to marry her and to give her sons. The child was considered the son of the brother who died (**Onan knew that the heir would not be his**) because the living brother was only acting in his place.

i. This was done so the dead brother's name would be carried on. But also it was so the widow would have children to support her.

Apart from this, she would likely live the rest of her life as a destitute widow.

b. **When he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother:** Onan refused to take this responsibility seriously. He was more than happy to use Tamar for his sexual gratification, but he did not want to give Tamar a son he had to support but would be considered to be the son of Er.

i. Onan pursued sex as *only* a pleasurable experience. If he really didn't want to father a child by Tamar, he should never had sex with her at all. He refused to fulfill his obligation to his dead brother and Tamar.

ii. Many Christians have used this passage as a proof-text against masturbation. Indeed, masturbation has been called "onanism."

However, this does not seem to be the case here. Whatever Onan did, he was not masturbating. This was not a sin of masturbation, but a sin of refusing to care for his brother's widow by giving her offspring, and of a selfish use of sex.

4. (11) Judah's unfair dealing with Tamar.

Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

a. **Lest he also die like his brothers:** One can understand Judah's hesitancy to give his last son as a husband to Tamar. God already judged two of her previous husbands. Judah essentially vowed he would not give Shelah as husband to Tamar as custom and righteousness commanded, but he would simply put her off on the issue.

b. **Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house:** This was no place for a young, childless widow to be, when there were additional brothers in her husband's family who could fulfill the obligation they owed to their late brother.

None of this was the fault of Tamar. All the blame belonged to the sons of Judah.

B. Tamar bears a child by Judah.

1. (12-14) Judah's wife dies, and Tamar realizes Judah will never give his last son to fulfill the obligation to her.

Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." So she took off her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place which was on the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife.

a. **She saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife:** Tamar did not want to face what would be a very difficult existence in that culture or in any culture: life without any husband or children.

b. **She was not given to him as a wife:** Tamar didn't have the option of just finding another man to marry. She was under the headship of her father-in-law Judah, and he had to *give* her a husband. *He* determined whom and when she could marry.

2. (15-18) Tamar sets a trap for Judah, and he has sex with her.

When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?" And he said, "I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, "Will you give me a pledge till you send it?"

Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" So she said, "Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand."

Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him.

a. **When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face:** After negotiating the price, Tamar demanded a pledge of the future payment of the agreed-upon price (**a young goat**).

b. **Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him:** When Tamar conceived, it certainly was not intended by Judah, but it was definitely planned by both Tamar and God.

3. (19-23) Tamar disappears.

So she arose and went away, and laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her.

Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was openly by the roadside?" And they said, "There was no harlot in this place." So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this place." Then Judah said, "Let her take them for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

a. **Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her:** Judah sends a friend to pay Tamar, and to retrieve the pledge he left with her. Because Tamar has disappeared, he gives up the pledge, leaving it in her hands.

4. (24-26) Tamar is vindicated and Judah is reproved.

And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has played the harlot; furthermore she is with child by harlotry." So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!" When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I am with child." And she said, "Please determine whose these are; the signet and cord, and staff." So Judah acknowledged them and said, "She has been

more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he never knew her again.

a. **Please determine whose these are:** Tamar, acted shrewdly and vindicated herself against the charge of harlotry. She makes the logical appeal of noting that the one who hired her is just as guilty as she.

b. **She has been more righteous than I:** however, even Judah could see through to the real issue. He was at fault for not providing for Tamar a son through his last son Shelah.

5. (27-30) Tamar gives birth to twins, Perez and Zerah.

Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins were in her womb. And so it was, when she was giving birth, that the one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? This breach be upon you!" Therefore his name was called Perez. Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand.

And his name was called Zerah.

a. **Therefore his name was called Perez . . .**

his name was called Zerah: Mat. 1:3 and Luk. 3:33 each list **Perez** as an ancestor of Jesus the Messiah. God took the son of this ungodly situation and put him in the family line of the Messiah, despite the fact that neither Judah or Tamar were examples of godliness.

i. This is a glorious example of grace. God chose them despite their works, not only to be in the line of the Messiah, but also to have a role in God's plan of redemption.

ii. It also reminds us these sons of Israel were by no means an "all-star team." They were a corrupt and problem-filled family.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite man¹

named Shua.² Judah acquired her as a wife³ and had marital relations with her.⁴ **3** She became pregnant¹ and had a son. Judah named² him Er. **4** She became pregnant again and had another son, whom she named Onan.^{note} **5** Then she had yet another son, whom she named Shelah. She gave birth to him in Kezib.

6 Judah acquired a wife for Er his firstborn; her name was Tamar. **7** But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD killed him.

8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Have sexual relations with your brother's wife and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her so that you may raise up a descendant for your brother." **9** But Onan knew that the child would not be considered his. So whenever he had sexual relations with his brother's wife, he withdrew prematurely so as not to give his brother a descendant. **10** What he did was evil in the LORD's sight, so the LORD killed him too.

11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Live as a widow in your father's house until Shelah my son grows up." For he thought, "I don't want him to die like his brothers." So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

12 After some time Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah was consoled, he left for Timnah to visit his sheepshearers, along with his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 Tamar was told, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." **14** So she removed her widow's clothes and covered herself with a veil. She wrapped herself and sat at the entrance to Enaim which is on the way to Timnah. (She did this because she saw that she had not been given to Shelah as a wife, even though he had now grown up.) **15** When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face. **16** He turned aside to her along the road and said, "Come on! I want to have sex with you." (He did not realize it was his daughter-in-law.) She asked, "What will you give me in exchange for having sex with you?" **17** He replied, "I'll send you a young

goat from the flock.” She asked, “Will you give me a pledge until you send it?” **18** He said, “What pledge should I give you?” She replied, “Your seal, your cord, and the staff that’s in your hand.” So he gave them to her and had sex with her. She became pregnant by him.

19 She left immediately, removed her veil, and put on her widow’s clothes.

20 Then Judah had his friend Hirah the Adullamite take a young goat to get back from the woman the items he had given in pledge, but Hirah could not find her. **21** He asked the men who were there, “Where is the cult prostitute who was at Enaim by the road?” But they replied, “There has been no cult prostitute here.” **22** So he returned to Judah and said, “I couldn’t find her. Moreover, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no cult prostitute here.’” **23** Judah said, “Let her keep the things for herself. Otherwise we will appear to be dishonest. I did indeed send this young goat, but you couldn’t find her.”

24 After three months Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has turned to prostitution, and as a result she has become pregnant.” Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” **25** While they were bringing her out, she sent word to her father-in-law: “I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong.” Then she said, “Identify the one to whom the seal, cord, and staff belong.” **26** Judah recognized them and said, “She is more upright than I am, because I wouldn’t give her to Shelah my son.” He did not have sexual relations with her again.

27 When it was time for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. **28** While she was giving birth, one child put out his hand, and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” **29** But then he drew back his hand, and his brother came out before him. She said, “How you have broken out of the womb!” So he was named Perez. **30** Afterward his brother came out – the

one who had the scarlet thread on his hand – and he was named Zerah.

1 Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt.¹ An Egyptian named Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh and the captain of the guard,² purchased him from³ the Ishmaelites who had brought him there.

Guzik - Genesis 39:1-23

Genesis 39 - Joseph in Potiphar's House

A. Joseph in Potiphar's house.

1. (1) Potiphar, an Egyptian official, buys Joseph.

Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

a. **Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him:** The name **Potiphar** means "devoted to the sun." It was a name connected with the Egyptian religious system.

b. **An officer of Pharaoh:** The ancient Hebrew word **officer** may be translated "eunuch." It was a common practice in ancient times to make those highest in the royal courts eunuchs, to ensure they would be wholly devoted to their king. Because this practice was common, the term came to be used for all who served in important positions in a king's court, whether they were eunuchs or not. So we really don't know if Potiphar was a eunuch.

c. **Captain of the guard:** The idea behind this title means "chief of police," or probably more precisely, Potiphar was head of Pharaoh's "Secret Service," his personal security force. He was a highly trusted official in the government of Egypt.

2. (2-3) God is with Joseph.

The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand.

a. **The LORD was with Joseph:** Joseph's trial was probably worse than any of us have gone through. Yet God did not abandon him even in the smallest way. If God allowed Joseph to be a slave, then he would be a **successful man** even as a slave.

i. We often complain to God that He put us in a terrible or difficult place. Yet God's will is that we trust Him to bless us and make us successful (as *He* measures success) wherever we are.

b. **He was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian:** Even at this early point when it seemed Joseph had no control over circumstances - and indeed, he had none - God overruled the evil or capricious choices of man to accomplish His eternal purpose.

c. **And his master saw that the LORD was with him:** By his trust in God, diligent work, and blessing from God, Joseph showed Potiphar that God was real. Our bosses should see the difference Jesus makes in our lives by the way we work.

3. (4-6) God blesses Potiphar for Joseph's sake.

So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. So it was, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field.

Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and he did not know what he had except for the bread which he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

a. **He made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority:** Because of God's blessing and Joseph's faithfulness, God made sure Joseph was advanced in his position, even as a slave.

i. It would have been easy for Joseph to do what we so often do: "write off" his present position because it seemed so bad

(he was a slave, after all). But Joseph believed God could bless him right where he was, so he didn't wait for a better situation to be blessed by God.

b. **The LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake:** After the same principle, blessing can be brought upon our workplace because of our presence of godliness.

c. **Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's hand:** Clearly, Joseph rose to the top, but it took a while to happen. Joseph was 17 years old when he was sold into slavery (Gen. 37:2).

He was 30 when Pharaoh promoted him (Gen. 41:46), and had been in prison for two years before that (Gen. 41:1). So, he was in Potiphar's house for 11 years. It took 11 years for the full measure of God's blessing to be accomplished in Joseph's life.

i. 11 years seems like a long time. Many think if advancement is from God, it must come quickly. Sometimes this is the case, but not normally. Normally, God allows good things to develop slowly. Human children have the longest development time both in the womb and in childhood compared to animals. It takes many years for an acorn to become an oak; a squash grows overnight.

d. **He left all that he had in Joseph's hand:** Imagine Joseph as a hard worker. When he came to Egypt, he was at a great disadvantage.

He knew nothing of the language, culture, customs, or ways of doing business. He had to get up early and stay up late to both do his job and to learn Egyptian ways.

i. Luther said, "Accordingly, Joseph was not only good and chaste, and not only diligently poured out prayers to God for his master, for the king, and for the whole land of Egypt, but he was also a most vigilant overseer and manager of the domestic tasks." (cited in Boice)

e. **Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance:** Joseph's appearance is of special note. The

Bible only calls two other men beautiful: David (1Sa. 16:12) and Absalom (2Sa. 14:25).

B. Joseph's resistance to temptation and its aftermath.

1. (7-10) The invitation of Potiphar's wife and Joseph's resistance.

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.

a. His master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

Potiphar's wife was undeniably forward towards Joseph. If Potiphar was indeed a eunuch, it shows that his wife looked for sexual activity elsewhere.

i. Perhaps Potiphar was a eunuch, and the marriage was purely a ceremonial arrangement, so she felt free to seek sexual relationships outside the marital bond.

ii. Of course, Joseph was an attractive man, and this had something to do with it. That he seemed "out of reach" to Potiphar's wife surely was a factor. She would not be the first or last woman who desired to seduce a man out of a sense of challenge.

iii. Also, it seems that in the ancient world, the code of morality for women in Egypt (even married women) was loose. Egyptian women had a reputation for immorality in the ancient world.

b. Lie with me: This was bold and strong temptation to Joseph. It reminds us that when we face strong temptations, other have faced the same. Satan wants you to think your

temptation is terribly unique; that no one you know could understand what you are going through. But there is no temptation that has overtaken us except what is common among men (1Co. 10:13).

c. **She spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her:** Joseph showed remarkable faithfulness towards God, Potiphar, and himself by resisting this temptation for so long - perhaps up to 11 years.

i. *Joseph let his faith be known.* Potiphar (and others, presumably) knew Joseph was blessed because of his relationship with God (Gen. 39:3). Joseph *had* to have said *something* about his relationship with God for this to be the case.

ii. *Joseph kept busy.* You don't advance the way he did unless you are a busy worker. An old Turkish proverb says, "Men are usually tempted by the devil, but an idle man positively tempts the devil."

iii. *Joseph was careful to never be alone with his temptation.* Joseph wisely even avoided being alone around Potiphar's wife (**or to be with her**).

iv. *Joseph called the act what it was: sin.* He referred to this sin set before him as **this great wickedness and sin against God**.

We want to call sin by another name.

Hostility and temper are "self-expression."

Pride is "self-esteem." Gluttony is "the good life."

Covetousness is "trying to get ahead."

Perversion is "an alternative lifestyle."

Adultery is "a cry for help in a bad marriage."

v. *Joseph knew how greatly his sin would affect others.* Often times we want to deny the harmful effects our sin will have. When we look at a charred mountainside, and all there is left is ashes and ruin, we despise the careless person who started the fire. Sin is no less destructive. Joseph never gave

in to the illusion that he could do this and never be discovered, or somehow it wouldn't matter.

vi. *Joseph knew that his sin was a sin against God.* One might justify sinning against another person who has done us wrong, but how can we sin against *God*?

David reflects this same heart in his prayer of repentance: *Against You and You only have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight* (Psa. 51:4). Of course, David had also sinned against Uriah, against Bathsheba, against their child, against his family, and against his people; but those were of far less consequence than his sin against God.

vii. *Joseph just said "No!"* **He refused.**

Sometimes it just comes down to that. We have to refuse and say "no" to sin, even when we *feel* like saying "yes." Knowing the fleshly inclination of men - their ability to detach sex from romance and love, and be promiscuous - this is wonderful obedience on the part of Joseph.

d. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

Obedience is much easier when we know who God is. "When I regarded God as a tyrant, I thought sin a trifle; but when I knew him to be my father, then I mourned that I could ever have kicked against him. When I thought that God was hard, I found it easy to sin; but when I found God so kind, so good, so overflowing with compassion, I smote upon my breast to think that I could ever have rebelled against one who loved me so, and sought my good." (Spurgeon) 2. (11-12) Joseph resists her brazen attempt at seduction.

But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside.

a. When Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house was inside, that

she caught him: Potiphar's wife knew Joseph was avoiding her, so she made a deliberate plan to entrap him.

Surely, it was she who made certain **none of the men of the house was inside.**

b. **She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside:** Joseph resisted this tremendous moment of temptation when he **ran outside.** Joseph did what we are all supposed to do when faced with this kind of situation: he **fled and ran.** 2Ti. 2:22 makes it clear: *Flee also youthful lusts.*

i. If we are not actually running towards sin, we have a tendency to at least linger in its presence. But we are commanded to do the only safe thing: run away from these lusts of the flesh, and run as fast as we can.

ii. The KJV says at Gen. 39:12, **He left the garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.** Joseph **got him out.** No one else was going to get him out. God provides a *way* of escape (1Co. 10:13), but you have to take the way out.

c. **He left his garment:** The idea is not that he ran away naked, but that his outer garment was stripped off. Essentially, he left in his underwear.

d. **Fled and ran outside:** Joseph had to know this stand for purity would cost him dearly, but he considered it worth it.

3. (13-18) Potiphar's wife falsely accuses Joseph before Potiphar.

And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a Hebrew to mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside." So she kept his garment with her until his master came home.

Then she spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to

mock me; so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

a. **He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice:** It must have offended and grieved Joseph to be accused under such an outrageous lie. Yet he did not seem to defend himself against this false accusation, even as Jesus was silent before His accusers (Isa. 53:7 and Mat. 27:13-14).

4. (19-20) Joseph is sent to prison.

So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his anger was aroused. Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were confined. And he was there in the prison.

a. **Then Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison:** It seems that Joseph was given a sentence of life imprisonment. This was a hard penalty, but the normal punishment for such a crime (attempted rape) by a slave upon a high official's wife would likely be death.

Joseph was given a merciful sentence.

b. **His anger was aroused:** Potiphar went easy on Joseph because he suspected his wife's role in the matter. The **anger** aroused may have not been directed towards Joseph, but against the wife for manipulating him into a situation where, to save face, he had to dismiss the man who made the whole household run well.

i. "Death was the only penalty Joseph could reasonably expect. His reprieve presumably owed much to the respect he had won; and Potiphar's mingled wrath and restraint may reflect a faint misgiving about the full accuracy of the charge." (Kidner) 5. (21-23) Joseph prospers, even in prison.

But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did

there, it was his doing. The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made it prosper.

a. **But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy:** If God blessed Joseph in the pit, if He blessed Joseph the slave, we are not be surprised to see Him bless Joseph in prison. None of these terrible circumstances derailed God's plan for Joseph's life.

i. The dominating theme is Joseph succeeded because of the blessing of God: · *The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man* (Gen. 39:2) · *His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand* (Gen. 39:3) · *The LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had* (Gen.

39:5)

ii. Even after Joseph is falsely accused and thrown into prison, God still blesses: · **But the LORD was with Joseph** (Gen.

39:21)

· **The LORD was with him** (Gen. 39:23) iii. "It is but of little consequence where the lot of a servant of God may be cast; like Joseph he is ever employed for his master, and God honours him and prospers his work." (Clarke)

b. **The keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing:** As it was in the house of Potiphar, Joseph rose to the top, becoming the chief administrator of the prison. Through his experience in both places, God sharpened the administrative skills Joseph needed to one day save his family and save the whole world.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The LORD was with Joseph. He was successful¹ and lived² in the household of his Egyptian master. **3** His master observed that the LORD was with him

and that the LORD made everything he was doing successful.¹ **4** So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal attendant. Potiphar appointed Joseph overseer of his household and put him in charge of everything he owned.

note **5** From the time Potiphar appointed him over his household and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's household for Joseph's sake. The blessing of the LORD was on everything that he had, both in his house and in his fields. **6** So Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; he gave no thought to anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well built and good-looking. **7** Soon after these things, his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Have sex with me." **8** But he refused, saying to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not give any thought to his household with me here, and everything that he owns he has put into my care. **9** There is no one greater in this household than I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you because you are his wife. So how could I do such a great evil and sin against God?" **10** Even though she continued to speak to Joseph day after day, he did not respond to her invitation to have sex with her.

11 One day he went into the house to do his work when none of the household servants were there in the house.

12 She grabbed him by his outer garment, saying, "Have sex with me!" But he left his outer garment in her hand and ran outside. **13** When she saw that he had left his outer garment in her hand and had run outside, **14** she called for her household servants and said to them, "See, my husband brought in a Hebrew man to us to humiliate us. He tried to have sex with me, but I screamed loudly.

15 When he heard me raise my voice and scream, he left his outer garment beside me and ran outside."

16 So she laid his outer garment beside her until his master came home. **17** This is what she said to him: "That Hebrew

slave you brought to us tried to humiliate me, **18** but when I raised my voice and screamed, he left his outer garment and ran outside.”

19 When his master heard his wife say, “This is the way your slave treated me,” he became furious. **20** Joseph’s master took him and threw him into the prison, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined. So he was there in the prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him kindness. He granted him favor in the sight of the prison warden. **22** The warden put all the prisoners under Joseph’s care. He was in charge of whatever they were doing. **23** The warden did not concern himself with anything that was in Joseph’s care because the LORD was with him and whatever he was doing the LORD was making successful.

1 After these things happened, the cupbearer¹ to the king of Egypt and the royal baker² offended³ their master, the king of Egypt.

Guzik - Genesis 40:1-23

Genesis 40 - Joseph Interprets Dreams in Prison

A. Joseph meets the butler and the baker in prison.

1. (1-4) The Egyptian royal butler and baker are put into prison.

It came to pass after these things that the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

a. **The butler and the baker of the king of Egypt:** The **butler** was in charge of Pharaoh's wine. The **baker** was in charge of Pharaoh's food. They were imprisoned because they **offended their lord, the king of Egypt**. It is difficult to tell if it was in a minor or a major way. Considering how

the account will develop, it is probable there was a plot to murder the Pharaoh (perhaps by poisoning).

i. But we never lose sight of the over-arching reason: whatever *external* reason they were sent to prison, they were *really* there to meet Joseph.

b. **The captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them:** This favorable treatment of Joseph by the **captain of the guard** shows that Potiphar did not really believe the accusations his wife made against Joseph. We know this because Potiphar himself was **the captain of the guard** (Gen. 39:1).

c. **And he served them:** Though Joseph had a position of high authority in the prison, he did not use it to make other serve him. He used his high position to serve others.

2. (5-7) Joseph shows concern for the butler and baker.

Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night and each man's dream with its own interpretation. And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why do you look so sad today?"

a. **Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad:** This is a window into the heart of Joseph. Men who are consumed with anger and bitterness do not take a concern for the personal problems of others like this.

b. **Why do you look so sad today?** It would be easy - perhaps technically true - for Joseph to think that because of all the wrong done against him, everything should revolve around his own feelings and hurts. Instead, he cared that the butler and the baker looked **so sad** one day.

i. This is one of the keys to living like Jesus: being an others-centered person. Joseph could have justified certain self-

centeredness in his life ("I have to take care of myself right now"), but he did not.

3. (8) Joseph invites them to tell him their disturbing dreams.

And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it." So Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me, please."

a. **Tell them to me, please:** This was not a case of mere discussion of dreams for the sake of curiosity or a form of fortune telling. Joseph saw these men were clearly disturbed by their dreams, and approached the dreams from a desire to meet their needs.

b. **Do not interpretations belong to God?**

Joseph has experience with dreams. His two dreams about his future greatness antagonized his family (Gen. 37:5-11), and he was mocked as *the dreamer* (Gen. 37:19-20).

i. Joseph was confident that **God** knew what the dream was about. He was like the one boy who told another, "My father and I know everything." When the other boy asked a hard question, the boy just said, "That's one for my dad." Joseph knew he and his Father *together* knew everything.

c. **Do not interpretations belong to God?**

God may certainly speak through dreams and many passages of Scripture show this (Gen.

20:3; 28:12; 31:11; 31:24; Num. 12:6; 1Sa.

28:6; Joe. 2:28; Mat. 1:20; 2:13; 2:22).

However, not every dream is a revelation from God. We must be careful about putting too much weight on dreams.

i. Dreams can come just because our minds are busy: *A dream comes through much activity . . . For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity* (Ecc. 5:3, 7).

ii. The Bible warns of false prophets using dreams to give weight to their message (Deu. 13:1-5, Jer. 23:25-28).

B. Joseph interprets their dreams.

1. (9-11) The butler explains his dream.

Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches; it was as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes.

Then Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

a. **In my dream a vine was before me, and in the vine were three branches:** Though this dream was from God, God used figures and pictures that made sense to the butler (a **vine**, **grapes**, and serving the Pharaoh wine).

2. (12-15) Joseph interprets the butler's dream and asks a favor.

And Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler.

But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

a. **The three branches are three days. Now within three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your place:** There are aspects to this dream that could not have been guessed, such as the three branches representing three days. Joseph's interpretation of this dream came from God, not his own wisdom.

i. Joseph was bold enough to give an interpretation that could be proved right or wrong **within three days**. In only three days, everyone will know if Joseph was correct or not.

b. **Remember me when it is well with you:** Joseph asked the butler to work for his release.

Though Joseph showed godly character in the Egyptian prison by not becoming angry and bitter in his heart, he wasn't stupid either. He wanted to get out, and used appropriate means to do so.

i. Joseph could have had "fatalistic faith,"

saying, "Well, if the LORD wants me out of prison, He will do it, and I won't have to do anything." It is true that Joseph will not get out of prison until the LORD wants it. But none of that precludes Joseph taking wise and good steps to accomplish what he thinks to be God's will. The butler won't remember until God wants him to anyway.

3. (16-19) The baker tells his dream and Joseph interprets it. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also was in my dream, and there were three white baskets on my head. In the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head." So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

a. **When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good:** The baker was encouraged that his companion had a good interpretation of his dream, but he found out his dream did not tell of good to come.

b. **Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree:** Joseph was just as faithful to deliver the heavy message as he was to deliver the happy message. This is the mark of a godly preacher, who does not fail to bring the whole counsel of God.

i. "How many there are who are willing to preach the cupbearer's sermon but are unwilling to preach the baker's sermon!" (Boice)

c. **The birds will eat your flesh from you:** This is a disgraceful death, but Joseph must have understood that the

fate of the butler and the baker was each according to justice.

Whatever crime they were suspected of, the butler was innocent but the baker was guilty.

4. (20-23) The dreams come to pass exactly according to Joseph's interpretations.

Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

a. **Now it came to pass on the third day:** The three days until Joseph was proved right must have been agonizing for the butler and the baker (though more so for the baker), yet Joseph was found to be a true messenger of God.

b. **Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him:** Here Joseph is wronged again. He thought that butler's kindness might mean his release from prison, but it was not to be. God had another purpose.

i. All men God uses greatly, He first prepares greatly. Few are willing to endure the greatness of God's preparation. God orders both our *steps* and *stops*.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Pharaoh was enraged with his two officials,¹ the cupbearer and the baker, **3** so he imprisoned them in the house of the captain of the guard in the same facility where Joseph was confined. **4** The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be their attendant, and he served them.

They spent some time in custody.note **5** Both of them, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream the same night. Each man's dream had its own meaning. **6** When Joseph came to

them in the morning, he saw that they were looking depressed. **7** So he asked Pharaoh's officials, who were with him in custody in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?" **8** They told him, "We both had dreams, but there is no one to interpret them." Joseph responded, "Don't interpretations belong to God? Tell them to me."

9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: "In my dream, there was a vine in front of me. **10** On the vine there were three branches. As it budded, its blossoms opened and its clusters ripened into grapes. **11** Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, so I took the grapes, squeezed them into his cup, and put the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12 "This is its meaning," Joseph said to him. "The three branches represent three days. **13** In three more days Pharaoh will reinstate you and restore you to your office.

You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you did before when you were cupbearer. **14** But remember me when it goes well for you, and show me kindness. Make mention of me to Pharaoh and bring me out of this prison, **15** for I really was kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews and I have done nothing wrong here for which they should put me in a dungeon."

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation of the first dream was favorable, he said to Joseph, "I also appeared in my dream and there were three baskets of white bread on my head. **17** In the top basket there were baked goods of every kind for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them from the basket that was on my head."

18 Joseph replied, "This is its meaning: The three baskets represent three days. **19** In three more days Pharaoh will decapitate you and impale you on a pole.

Then the birds will eat your flesh from you."

20 On the third day it was Pharaoh's birthday, so he gave a feast for all his servants. He "lifted up" the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker in the midst of his servants. **21** He restored the chief cupbearer to his former

position so that he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand, **22** but the chief baker he impaled, just as Joseph had predicted. **23** But the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph – he forgot him.

1 At the end of two full years¹ Pharaoh had a dream.² As he was standing by the Nile, Guzik - Genesis 41:1-57

Genesis 41 - Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dream

and Rises to Power

A. Pharaoh's dreams and his dilemma.

1. (1-7) Pharaoh's disturbing dreams.

Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows.

So Pharaoh awoke. He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads.

So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream.

a. **At the end of two full years:** Joseph was in prison - forgotten by the royal butler - for two years now. But God had a purpose in the delay, and now the purpose is explained. After all, if God wanted it, the butler could have remembered Joseph a year or more earlier. But God moved in His perfect timing.

b. **Pharaoh had a dream:** In Pharaoh's dream, seven fat cows came out of the waters of the Nile and were consumed by seven gaunt cows. Then in a second dream, seven thin heads devoured seven fat heads of wheat.

2. (8-14) Joseph is called in to interpret Pharaoh's dreams.

Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I

remember my faults this day. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh.

a. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them: Egypt's magicians were impressive, yet they could not interpret the dreams. Pharaoh knew they were significant, yet no one could give a suitable explanation of their meaning.

b. **I remember my faults this day:** The butler finally remembered Joseph and confessed the wrong he did against him. He recommended Joseph to Pharaoh as a man who interprets dreams.

c. **Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon:** When it was in the timing of God to get Joseph out of prison, it all happened **quickly**. Often, we feel there are long periods of time when God doesn't do anything, but when His timing is right everything can come together in an instant.

i. During the times we think God isn't doing anything, He is doing the work most important to Him: developing our character and transforming us into the image of Jesus Christ.

3. (15-16) Joseph comes before Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it.

But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying,

"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

a. **It is not in me:** Pharaoh gave Joseph a golden opportunity to glorify himself, but Joseph will have none of it. He did not use this as an opportunity to glorify himself before Pharaoh, but only to glorify God.

b. **God will give Pharaoh and answer of peace:** Joseph seems much wiser and perhaps more humble than he did before, considering the way he told his brothers his previous dreams in a self-glorying way.

i. God's work of character building was being accomplished in Joseph even when he perhaps thought nothing was happening.

4. (17-24) Pharaoh tells Joseph his dream.

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven heads came up on one stalk, full and good.

Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, and blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them.

And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told this to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me."

a. **They were just as ugly as at the beginning:** More details of the dream come out on the second telling. When the skinny cows ate the fat cows, they themselves did not become fat.

B. Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream.

1. (25-32) Joseph interprets the dream.

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do.

Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass."

a. **The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do:** The seven cows and seven heads of grain each represent seven years. There will be seven years of plenty and abundance, then seven years of want and famine. The years of famine will be so bad that the good years **will be forgotten**.

b. **The dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God:** Joseph saw the confirming hand of God in the repetition of the dream. He knew the principle of *by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established* (Deu.

19:15), even if he didn't have it written in Scripture yet. The repetition also gave Joseph a sense of urgency: **God will shortly bring it to pass**.

c. **God will:** Joseph knew the matter was entirely in the hands of God. God had a purpose for the dream, a purpose for the timing, a purpose for the famine, a purpose for Joseph being in jail, and a purpose for everything.

2. (33-36) Joseph gives his advice to Pharaoh.

"Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Then that food shall be as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine."

a. **Let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years:** Joseph shows both his boldness and his gift of administration. No responsible administrator would present such news without also suggesting a plan to meet the coming crisis.

b. **That the land may not perish during the famine:** Joseph sensed there was a reason *why* God gave this word to Pharaoh. It was so he could prepare for the coming crisis. This wasn't just gossip from heaven to earth. It was an urgent call to action.

c. **Select a discerning and wise man:** God picks a **man** when He has something to accomplish. He uses people to further His plan.

"God always works through men performing tasks on the earth." (Barnhouse) 3. (37-45) Joseph's promotion to a position of great authority.

So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?" Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt."

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.

a. **In whom is the Spirit of God:** This is the first mention in the Bible of the Holy Spirit coming upon a man. Pharaoh saw that Joseph was filled with the **Spirit of God**.

b. **Only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you:** Joseph has now gone from the pit to the pinnacle, but it took some 13

years to happen. From the outside, Joseph looked like an "overnight success," but it was more than 13 years in the making.

i. Joseph is a good example of a man who seemed to have all the gifts and talents for leadership, but God developed his character and talents over many years. Gifts and talents may be impressive and immediate, but character is what God looks for and always takes time to develop.

c. **And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-Paaneah:** Jewish legends say each letter of Joseph's Egyptian name means something. Linking them all together, the name is "Seer - redeemer - prophet - supporter - interpreter of dreams - clever - discreet - wise."

i. More likely the name means, *God Speaks and He Lives*, referring to God's word coming through Joseph, his own preservation, and the way he has preserved the country.

d. **And he gave him as a wife Asenath:** Jewish legends (fabrications, really) say Asenath was really the daughter of Dinah and Shechem, who was many years earlier abandoned

at the border of Egypt, and she was adopted into the family of an Egyptian priest.

C. Joseph's life as Prime Minister.

1. (46-49) The seven years of plenty came to pass.

Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth abundantly. So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. Joseph gathered very much grain, as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable.

a. **He gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt:** Joseph did what was right. He actually stored up the grain during the seven years of plenty.

b. **Joseph gathered very much grain:** It seems it was customary for Pharaoh to take 10% of the grain in Egypt as a tax. Essentially, Joseph doubled the taxes over the next seven years (Gen. 41:34 mentions *one-fifth*, that is, 20%).

2. (50-52) Joseph's two sons and his state of heart.

And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

a. **Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh:** From his Egyptian wife, Joseph fathered **Manasseh**, whose name means "forgetfulness." This was because God made Joseph to forget all the previous pain and trial in his life. His second son is **Ephraim**, which means "fruitfulness," because God made Joseph fruitful in Egypt.

i. We can't be *doubly fruitful* until we are also *forgetting*. In his book *The Great Divorce*, C.S. Lewis described hell as a place where no one forgets anything, remembering every slight, every cruel exchange of words, every wrong ever done to them, and everybody is utterly unforgiving. But in heaven all these things are put away because all things have become new.

b. **For God has made me forget . . . For God has caused me to be fruitful:** Joseph did not forget the faith of his fathers even though he rose to great glory in Egypt and had an Egyptian wife. As a sign of this his children were given Hebrew names not Egyptian names.

3. (53-57) The seven years of famine begin.

Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, do." The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, because the famine was severe in all lands.

a. **The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread:** Because of Joseph's wise preparation, Egypt became a supply source for the whole region, which experiences this severe famine.

b. **So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain:** The people in Canaan - including Joseph's family - also suffered from this famine.

But God made wise (though unexpected provision) for them by sending Joseph ahead of the family.

i. *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose* (Rom. 8:28). Joseph did not have Rom. 8:28

on paper, but he had it in his heart. A Christian today may very well have it on paper, but not on the heart.

C. So far in the Book of Genesis, Joseph is a remarkable picture of Jesus Christ.

1. Was a shepherd.
2. Loved by his father.
3. Sent unto his brethren.
4. Hated by his brothers.
5. Prophesied his coming glory.
6. Rejected by his brothers.
7. Endured unjust punishment from his brothers.
8. Sentenced to the pit.
9. Delivered to the pit, though a leader knew he should go free.
10. Sold for pieces of silver.
11. Handed over to the Gentiles.
12. Regarded as dead, but raised out of the pit.
13. Went to Egypt.
14. Made a servant.
15. Tempted severely, but did not sin.
16. Falsely accused.
17. Made no defense.
18. Cast into prison, and numbered with sinners and criminals.
19. Endured unjust punishment from Gentiles.
20. Associated with two other criminals; one is pardoned and one is not.
 - a. Some associate the butler, with his wine, and the baker with the elements of communion.

Along the same lines, some associate the threeday period before their case is resolved with the three days before the resurrection of Jesus.

21. Showed compassion.
22. Brought a message of deliverance in prison.
23. Wanted to be remembered.
24. Shown to have divine wisdom.

- 25. Recognized as having the Spirit of God.
- 26. Betrayed by friends.
- 27. Glorified after his humility.
- 28. Honored among Gentiles while still despised or forgotten by his brethren.
- 29. Given a Gentile bride.
- 30. Was 30 years old when he began his life's work.
- 31. Blessed the world with bread.
- 32. Became the only source of bread for the world.
- 33. The world was instructed to go to him and do whatever he said to do.
- 34. Was given the name "God Speaks and He Lives."

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** seven fine-looking, fat cows were coming up out of the Nile,¹ and they grazed in the reeds. **3** Then seven bad-looking, thin cows were coming up after them from the Nile,¹ and they stood beside the other cows at the edge of the river.² **4** The bad-looking, thin cows ate the seven fine-looking, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. **5** Then he fell asleep again and had a second dream: There were seven heads of grain growing on one stalk, healthy and good. **6**

Then seven heads of grain, thin and burned by the east wind, were sprouting up after them. **7** The thin heads swallowed up the seven healthy and full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up and realized it was a dream.

8 In the morning he was troubled, so he called for all the diviner-priests of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him. **9** Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "Today I recall my failures. **10** Pharaoh was enraged with his servants, and he put me in prison in the house of the captain of the guards – me and the chief baker. **11** We each had a dream one night; each of us had a dream with its own meaning. **12** Now a young man, a Hebrew, a servant of the captain of the guards, was with us there.

We told him our dreams, and he interpreted the meaning of each of our respective dreams for us. **13** It happened just as he had said to us – Pharaoh restored me to my office, but he impaled the baker.”

14 Then Pharaoh summoned Joseph. So they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; he shaved himself, changed his clothes, and came before Pharaoh. **15**

Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard about you, that you can interpret dreams.” **16** Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “It is not within my power, but God will speak concerning the welfare of Pharaoh.”

17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream I was standing by the edge of the Nile. **18** Then seven fat and fine-looking cows were coming up out of the Nile, and they grazed in the reeds. **19** Then seven other cows came up after them; they were scrawny, very bad-looking, and lean. I had never seen such bad-looking cows as these in all the land of Egypt! **20** The lean, bad-looking cows ate up the seven fat cows. **21** When they had eaten them, no one would have known that they had done so, for they were just as bad-looking as before. Then I woke up. **22** I also saw in my dream seven heads of grain growing on one stalk, full and good. **23** Then seven heads of grain, withered and thin and burned with the east wind, were sprouting up after them. **24** The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads of grain. So I told all this to the diviner-priests, but no one could tell me its meaning.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Both dreams of Pharaoh have the same meaning. God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. **26** The seven good cows represent seven years, and the seven good heads of grain represent seven years. Both dreams have the same meaning. **27** The seven lean, bad-looking cows that came up after them represent seven years, as do the seven empty heads of grain burned with the east wind. They represent seven years of famine.

28 This is just what I told Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.

29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the whole land of Egypt. **30** But seven years of famine will occur after them, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will devastate the land.

31 The previous abundance of the land will not be remembered because of the famine that follows, for the famine will be very severe. **32** The dream was repeated to Pharaoh because the matter has been decreed by God, and God will make it happen soon.

33 “So now Pharaoh should look for a wise and discerning man and give him authority over all the land of Egypt. **34** Pharaoh should do this – he should appoint officials throughout the land to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. **35** They should gather all the excess food during these good years that are coming. By Pharaoh’s authority they should store up grain so the cities will have food, and they should preserve it. **36** This food should be held in storage for the land in preparation for the seven years of famine that will occur throughout the land of Egypt. In this way the land will survive the famine.”

37 This advice made sense to Pharaoh and all his officials.

38 So Pharaoh asked his officials, “Can we find a man like Joseph, one in whom the Spirit of God is present?” **39** So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Because God has enabled you to know all this, there is no one as wise and discerning as you are! **40** You will oversee my household, and all my people will submit to your commands. Only I, the king, will be greater than you.

41 “See here,” Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I place you in authority over all the land of Egypt.” **42** Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his own hand and put it on Joseph’s.

He clothed him with fine linen clothes and put a gold chain around his neck. **43** Pharaoh had him ride in the chariot

used by his second-in-command, and they cried out before him, "Kneel down!" So he placed him over all the land of Egypt. **44** Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your permission no one will move his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt." **45** Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-Paneah. He also gave him Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, to be his wife. So Joseph took charge of all the land of Egypt.

46 Now Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph was commissioned by Pharaoh and was in charge of all the land of Egypt. **47**

During the seven years of abundance the land produced large, bountiful harvests. **48** Joseph collected all the excess food in the land of Egypt during the seven years and stored it in the cities. In every city he put the food gathered from the fields around it. **49** Joseph stored up a vast amount of grain, like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it because it was impossible to measure.

50 Two sons were born to Joseph before the famine came. Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, was their mother. **51** Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, saying, "Certainly God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's house." **52** He named the second child Ephraim, saying, "Certainly God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

53 The seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an end. **54** Then the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had predicted. There was famine in all the other lands, but throughout the land of Egypt there was food. **55** When all the land of Egypt experienced the famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to all the people of Egypt, "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you."

56 While the famine was over all the earth, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians.

The famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt. **57**

People from every country came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain because the famine was severe throughout the earth.

1 When Jacob heard¹ there was grain in Egypt, he² said to his sons, "Why are you looking at each other?"³

Guzik - Genesis 42:1-38

Genesis 42 - Joseph Meets His Brothers in Egypt

A. The sons of Jacob come to Egypt.

1. (1-4) Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to buy grain.

When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die."

So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Lest some calamity befall him."

a. **Why do you look at one another?** Jacob noticed a strange expression among the brothers when **Egypt** was mentioned, because the brothers knew it was likely Joseph was sold as a slave there. Their conscience made them feel terrible any time **Egypt** was mentioned.

i. "The father has noted the look of perplexity in his son's faces" . . . literally, the phrase means, "to look questioningly one at the other." (Leupold) ii. "The word *Egypt* in their ears must have sounded like the word *rope* in the house of a man who has hanged himself." (Barnhouse) iii. Joseph's brothers had lived with a terrible secret these 20 years. They never talked about it but it never left them. Any mention of Joseph or Egypt would dredge up the guilt. They needed to be set free from the power of this terrible secret.

b. **Lest some calamity befall him:** The impression we have of Jacob from this chapter is of a man who is bitter and pessimistic about everything. Because of this calamity, he believes another disaster is on the way.

c. **Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin:** In keeping with this attitude, he demanded Benjamin be left

behind. Though he had 11 sons only one was a son of his beloved wife Rachel, and Jacob felt he must protect him.

i. Yet, if Jacob only knew! If he could only trust the hand of God which he could not see! In fact, the only reason there is grain in Egypt to provide for their needs is because God sent Joseph on ahead. God knew what He was doing.

ii. Famine is not a good thing, but God used it. God can and does use material need and lack in our life to get us to do things we normally would never do. Normally, the brothers would never go to Egypt. But *need* drove them to Egypt.

2. (5-6) The sons of Jacob bow down before Joseph.

And the sons of Israel went to buy grain among those who journeyed, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.

a. **Bowed down before him with their faces to the earth:** They knew that in this time of famine, their lives literally depended on this Egyptian official. Therefore they paid him great respect by bowing.

b. **With their faces to the earth:** Obviously, this reminded Joseph of the dream he had some 20 years before, that his brothers would bow down to him (Gen. 37:5-8).

i. When Joseph's brothers plotted murder against him and sold him into slavery they did it specifically attempting to defeat his dreams (Gen. 37:19-20). Instead, by sending Joseph to Egypt, they provided the way the dreams would be fulfilled.

ii. The great and glorious truth of God's providence is He can and does use the evil actions of man towards us to further His good plan. This never excuses man's evil, but it means God's wisdom and goodness are greater than man's evil. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise You* (Psa. 76:10).

3. (7-17) Joseph interrogates his brothers and puts them into prison.

Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see the nakedness of the land!" And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. "We are all one man's sons; we are honest men; your servants are not spies." But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land." And they said, "Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no more." But Joseph said to them, "It is as I spoke to you, saying, 'You are spies!' In this manner you shall be tested: By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether there is any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies!" So he put them all together in prison three days.

a. **Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger:** Joseph, speaking through an interpreter (he did not yet want to reveal that he speaks Hebrew), did not reveal his identity to his brothers, but instead treated them roughly.

b. **Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them:** Joseph was not playing games with his brothers. Some commentators believe that if it were up to Joseph, he would have revealed himself to his brothers right then and there. But God recalled the dreams to his mind and guided him to be an instrument for the correction and restoration of the brothers.

i. God can, and must, sometimes use ways we think are harsh to call us to where He wants us to be. We must never

resent it, because it was the hardness of our hearts that demanded it. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word.*

(Psa. 119:67)

c. **One is no more:** This was a lie, and the brothers knew it. They had every reason to believe Joseph was not dead, but living a horrible life of slavery. Perhaps they had repeated the lie to themselves so often they came to believe it.

4. (18-20) Joseph gives the terms for their release from prison.

Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, for I fear God: If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die." And they did so.

a. **Do this and live:** After three days in an Egyptian prison, the brothers ready to agree to whatever Joseph wanted them to do. This was good, because Joseph was clearly in control.

b. **I fear God:** Joseph didn't want his brothers to *fear* him as much as he wanted his brothers to *trust* him. If the brothers were wise enough to consider what this really meant, it would be a great comfort to them.

c. **If you are honest men:** Joseph's demand was clear. They had to prove they were not spies by proving they were honest and that they told the truth about the brother back home. The brothers agreed to this (**And they did so**) but only reluctantly, because they knew their father would never want to part with Benjamin.

5. (21-24) The guilty conscience of Joseph's brothers at work.

Then they said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us." And Reuben answered

them, saying, "Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen?

Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us." But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

a. **We are truly guilty concerning our brother:** They thought this mess was before them because of the way they treated Joseph before, and their conscience was pricked. This was a good sign. The *quickness* with which they associated these events with their sin against Joseph probably meant they often remembered their sin against him.

i. There was not a completely logical connection between their current situation and their previous treatment of Joseph. But a guilty conscience sees every trouble as sin's penalty.

ii. The United States government has something called the Federal Conscience Fund, which collects money people send in because they know they cheated the government in some way. People have sent in money because they took army blankets for souvenirs, for cheating on postage, or on income tax. But our consciences are notoriously weak or corrupt. One man wrote the IRS and said, "I cheated on my taxes and can't sleep at night. Here is a check for \$100. If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest I owe."

b. **Therefore this distress has come upon us:** In these words we hear the conscience of the brothers at work. Some describe the conscience as the "sundial of the soul." It tells time well enough when there is light, but in darkness it is of no use. At night, you can shine a flashlight on a sundial and make it read any time you want it to. When the light of God's word shines on our conscience, it is reliable and trustworthy.

i. Otherwise, our conscience can be like a circus-trained poodle. Whistle once, it stands up. Whistle twice, it rolls over. Whistle a third time, and it plays dead.

c. **He turned himself away from them and wept:** Joseph was overcome with emotion as he saw and understood this work of God in the conscience of his brothers. God had to do a profound work in the hearts of these brothers for the relationship to be reconciled.

i. There could be no quick and easy "We are sorry, Joseph!" in this situation. God will guide events so the brothers see their sin clearly and repent completely before Joseph is revealed and relationship is restored.

ii. Yet even before the restoration, Joseph will not allow himself to be bound by bitterness and hatred. He still loves his brothers and wants to be with them (**he returned to them again, and talked with them**).

d. **He took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes:** Joseph retained Simeon as a prisoner to guarantee the return of the brothers. Simeon was not mentioned as having a prominent role in the selling of Joseph, as both Reuben and Judah were (Gen. 37:21-28), so we don't know exactly why Simeon was chosen. Perhaps he volunteered.

B. Jacob's sons return home to Canaan.

1. (25-28) The brothers find their money returned.

Then Joseph gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey.

Thus he did for them. So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there.

But as one of them opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"

a. **Their hearts failed them and they were afraid:** They were terrified because they were already suspected as spies. Now they can be accused as thieves also.

b. **What is this that God has done to us?**

The guilty consciences of the brothers are hard at work, bringing every adversity back to God.

2. (29-35) They return to Jacob and tell him the story.

Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: "The man who is lord of the land spoke roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no more, and the youngest is with our father this day in the land of Canaan.'

Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, take food for the famine of your households, and be gone. And bring your youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you are not spies, but that you are honest men. I will grant your brother to you, and you may trade in the land.' " Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly each man's bundle of money was in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

a. **We are honest men:** The same brothers lied to their father some twenty years before, saying that Joseph was killed by a wild animal when they sold him to slave-traders.

a. **One is no more:** The brothers repeat the lie again, and will be proven dramatically wrong.

3. (36) Jacob's reaction: **All these things are against me.**

And Jacob their father said to them, "You have bereaved me: Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin. All these things are against me."

a. **You have bereaved me:** Jacob obviously lost his trust in the ability of God to do more than he can see or understand.

Jacob could not rest in faith, trusting God to take care of the things which he did not know.

i. Jacob's heart sang this song: "No one loves me, this I know. My misfortunes tell me so."

b. **All these things are against me:** There was a sobering contrast between Jacob and Joseph. Joseph had far worse circumstances, but he never took the attitude **all these things are against me**.

i. The motto of too many Christians is **all these things are against me**. Instead, our motto should be Rom. 8:28: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

4. (37-38) Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go back to Egypt with them.

Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you." But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone.

If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

a. **Kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you:** Reuben did the best he could, making the dramatic gesture to allow Jacob to take Reuben's own two sons as surety, but Jacob would have none of it. He would not allow Benjamin to go to Egypt.

b. **My son shall not go down with you:** Apparently, Jacob didn't think too much of Simeon. It didn't matter to him that Simeon spent the rest of his life in an Egyptian jail.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He then said, "Look, I hear that there is grain in Egypt.

Go down there and buy grain for us¹ so that we may live² and not die."³

3 So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. **4** But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "What if some accident happens to him?"note **5** So Israel's sons came to buy grain among the other travelers, for the famine was severe in the land of Canaan.

6 Now Joseph was the ruler of the country, the one who sold grain to all the people of the country. Joseph's brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground.

7 When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger to them and spoke to them harshly. He asked, "Where do you come from?" They answered, "From the land of Canaan, to buy grain for food."

8 Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. **9** Then Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them, and he said to them, "You are spies; you have come to see if our land is vulnerable!"

10 But they exclaimed, "No, my lord! Your servants have come to buy grain for food! **11** We are all the sons of one man; we are honest men! Your servants are not spies."

12 "No," he insisted, "but you have come to see if our land is vulnerable." **13** They replied, "Your servants are from a family of twelve brothers. We are the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is with our father at this time, and one is no longer alive."

14 But Joseph told them, "It is just as I said to you: You are spies! **15** You will be tested in this way: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not depart from this place unless your youngest brother comes here. **16** One of you must go and get your brother, while the rest of you remain in prison. In this way your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If not, then, as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!" **17** He imprisoned them all for three days. **18** On the third day Joseph said to them, "Do as I say and you will live, for I fear God. **19** If you are honest men, leave one of your brothers confined here in prison while the rest of you go and

take grain back for your hungry families. **20** But you must bring your youngest brother to me. Then your words will be verified and you will not die.” They did as he said.

21 They said to one other, “Surely we’re being punished because of our brother, because we saw how distressed he was when he cried to us for mercy, but we refused to listen. That is why this distress has come on us!” **22**

Reuben said to them, “Didn’t I say to you, ‘Don’t sin against the boy,’ but you wouldn’t listen? So now we must pay for shedding his blood!” **23** (Now they did not know that Joseph could understand them, for he was speaking through an interpreter.) **24** He turned away from them and wept. When he turned around and spoke to them again, he had Simeon taken from them and tied up before their eyes.

25 Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to return each man’s money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. His orders were carried out. **26**

So they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

27 When one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey at their resting place, he saw his money in the mouth of his sack. **28** He said to his brothers, “My money was returned! Here it is in my sack!” They were dismayed; they turned trembling one to another and said, “What in the world has God done to us?”

29 They returned to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan and told him all the things that had happened to them, saying, **30** “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and treated us as if we were spying on the land. **31** But we said to him, ‘We are honest men; we are not spies! **32** We are from a family of twelve brothers; we are the sons of one father. One is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father at this time in the land of Canaan.’

33 “Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘This is how I will find out if you are honest men. Leave one of your brothers with me, and take grain for your hungry households and go. **34** But bring your youngest brother back to me so I

will know that you are honest men and not spies. Then I will give your brother back to you and you may move about freely in the land.”

35 When they were emptying their sacks, there was each man’s bag of money in his sack! When they and their father saw the bags of money, they were afraid. **36** Their father Jacob said to them, “You are making me childless! Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now you want to take Benjamin! Everything is against me.”

37 Then Reuben said to his father, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Put him in my care and I will bring him back to you.” **38** But Jacob replied, “My son will not go down there with you, for his brother is dead and he alone is left. If an accident happens to him on the journey you have to make, then you will bring down my gray hair in sorrow to the grave.”

1 Now the famine was severe in the land.¹

Guzik - Genesis 43:1-34

Genesis 43 - Joseph Meets His Brothers a

Second Time

A. Jacob decides to let the brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin.

1. (1-2) Jacob gives the order to get more food.

Now the famine was severe in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food."

a. **When they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt:** Perhaps Jacob originally thought they had enough to tide them over, so that they would never need to go back with Benjamin, and never need to go back and get Simeon. But they ran out of food.

b. **Go back, buy us a little food:** Necessity drove Jacob to do something he would normally never do. We might imagine Jacob prayed so hard for the famine to break, and asked God to send relief. We might imagine Jacob became angry and bitter against God for not answering those prayers. But God knew what He was doing and had something so much better for Jacob than he could ever imagine.

2. (3-10) Judah convinces his father to let them go to Egypt with Benjamin.

But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.' If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.'" And Israel said, "Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother?" But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?' And we

told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

a Why did you deal so wrongfully with me as to tell the man whether you had still another brother? Jacob clearly was grasping at straws. They must have discussed this question a hundred times before.

b. I myself will be surety for him: Judah put his own life on the line as a surety for Benjamin.

This is the first good thing we see Judah doing.

Previously, he was the one who had proposed the sale of Joseph. He was the one who wronged his daughter-in-law Tamar and had sex with her as a harlot.

i. Previously, Satan may have directed his attack against Joseph because he believed *he* was the one who would ultimately bring the Messiah. To this point, God had not revealed which of the 12 it would be.

ii. Satan not only hated the children of Jacob for what they were, but also for what God would make of them. He directs the same kind of hatred against believers today, as Satan considers the destiny God has for His people.

3. (11-14) Jacob sends them with money and gifts for the Egyptian leader.

And their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man; a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.

Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also,

and arise, go back to the man. And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

a. **Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and carry down a present for the man:**

Perhaps Jacob remembers how well it seemed to work when he showered Esau with gifts (Gen. 33:10-11).

b. **Take double money in your hand:** They took **double money** with them to Egypt to buy grain and the Egyptian leader's favor. Since ten brothers went to Egypt and they took double money, there were 20 units of money. This answers exactly to the 20 pieces of silver they sold Joseph for (Gen. 37:28). The words for *silver* and **money** are the same.

B. The sons of Jacob face Joseph again.

1. (15-18) Joseph invites the brothers to dinner.

So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and arose and went down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my home, and slaughter an animal and make ready; for these men will dine with me at noon." Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may make a case against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."

a. **Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house:** Perhaps they figured that the kindness from the Egyptian leader was just the prelude to an execution.

2. (19-23) The brothers explain about the money, and are treated well in Joseph's house.

When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, and said, "O sir, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; but it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks." But he said, "Peace be with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

a. **Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money:** This was not a lie, because he really did have it, and he gave it back. It really was because of God's goodness (if they only knew) that they had the money back.

3. (24-30) An emotionally charged meeting with Joseph and his brothers.

So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed down before him to the earth. Then he asked them about their wellbeing, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Your servant our father is in good health; he is still alive." And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves. Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." Now his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep. And he went into his chamber and wept there.

a. **Gave them water, and they washed their feet:** The brothers expected to be taken as slaves and have everything stolen (Gen.

43:18). Yet Joseph treated them with kindness.

This love and goodness from Joseph will win them over.

i. The brothers received the blessings of love and kindness from Joseph without knowing who he was. In the same way, God showers love and blessing upon man even when man doesn't know whom the blessing comes from.

b. **Now his heart yearned for his brother:** Joseph was especially affected at meeting his only full brother, Benjamin, whom he last saw as only a small child.

4. (31-32) The dinner tables are segregated.

Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread."

So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.

a. **The set him a place by himself:** Joseph did not eat with his brothers because at the time, Egypt was one of the most racist societies on earth. The believed that Egyptians came from the gods, and all other peoples came from lesser origins. There was absolutely no social mixing with foreigners in the Egypt of Joseph's day.

b. **And the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves:** The Egyptians would not even eat with Joseph, much less these strangers from Canaan. Even with all his status and power, Joseph could still not eat with "real" Egyptians.

i. "It is known from Herodotus that Egyptians so abhorred things foreign, that priests, at least, ate and drank nothing that was imported, nor would they use utensils for eating that had been used by Greeks." (Leupold)

ii. Herein is the wisdom of God. God will bring the entire family of Jacob into Egypt, where they will be isolated from

the surrounding people for some 400 years. In that time, they will multiply greatly, increasing to the millions. If God had allowed them to remain in Canaan, they would have simply assimilated into the corrupt and godless peoples of Canaan. The rape of Dinah and its aftermath (Genesis 34) and the sin of Judah's sons and Judah with Tamar (Genesis 38) revealed this danger.

iii. God not only had to take the family of Israel out of the corrupt environment of Canaan, but He had to put them among a racist people who would not intermarry or even mingle with them. God simply sent Joseph on ahead to make the arrangements.

5. (33-34) Joseph arranges them by order of birth and he favors Benjamin.

And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

a. **The firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth:** No wonder the brothers were filled with **astonishment**. The arrangement of the brothers was so amazing because they sensed it couldn't happen by chance. Statistically, the odds of placing 11 brothers in their precise order of birth are something like 1 in 40 million.

b. **Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs:** Joseph wanted to see how the brothers reacted when the younger brother (in this case, Benjamin) was favored, because they resented it so much when Joseph was favored by his father.

i. Joseph wanted to see if there was a change in the hearts of his brothers, or if they were the same men who threw him into a pit and were deaf to his cries for help.

ii. This may be his whole motivation in asking for Benjamin. He wondered if they would take care of Benjamin on such a journey, as they failed to do with Joseph.

iii. We should expect if we fail in a test somewhere, God will make arrangements for us to "take the test" again another time.

This is a sobering reason to take the test "well" the first time.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When they finished eating the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Return, buy us a little more food."

3 But Judah said to him, "The man solemnly warned¹ us, 'You will not see my face² unless your brother is with you.'

4 If you send our brother with us, we'll go down and buy food for you.note **5** But if you will not send him, we won't go down there because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.'"

6 Israel said, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had one more brother?"

7 They replied, "The man questioned us thoroughly about ourselves and our family, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' So we answered him in this way. How could we possibly know that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8 Then Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the boy with me and we will go immediately. Then we will live and not die - we and you and our little ones. **9** I myself pledge security for him; you may hold me liable. If I do not bring him back to you and place him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. **10** But if we had not delayed, we could have traveled there and back twice by now!"

11 Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: Take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and take a gift down to the man - a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachios and almonds. **12** Take double the money with you; you must

take back the money that was returned in the mouths of your sacks – perhaps it was an oversight. **13**

Take your brother too, and go right away to the man. **14**

May the sovereign God grant you mercy before the man so that he may release your other brother and Benjamin! As for me, if I lose my children I lose them.”

15 So the men took these gifts, and they took double the money with them, along with Benjamin. Then they hurried down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. **16** When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the servant who was over his household, “Bring the men to the house.

Slaughter an animal and prepare it, for the men will eat with me at noon.” **17** The man did just as Joseph said; he brought the men into Joseph’s house.

18 But the men were afraid when they were brought to Joseph’s house. They said, “We are being brought in because of the money that was returned in our sacks last time. He wants to capture us, make us slaves, and take our donkeys!”

19 So they approached the man who was in charge of Joseph’s household and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. **20** They said, “My lord, we did indeed come down the first time to buy food. **21** But when we came to the place where we spent the night, we opened our sacks and each of us found his money – the full amount – in the mouth of his sack. So we have returned it. **22** We have brought additional money with us to buy food. We do not know who put the money in our sacks!”

23 “Everything is fine,” the man in charge of Joseph’s household told them. “Don’t be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks. I had your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24 The servant in charge brought the men into Joseph’s house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet.

Then he gave food to their donkeys. **25** They got their gifts ready for Joseph’s arrival at noon, for they had heard that they were to have a meal there.

26 When Joseph came home, they presented him with the gifts they had brought inside, and they bowed down to the ground before him. **27** He asked them how they were doing. Then he said, "Is your aging father well, the one you spoke about? Is he still alive?" **28** "Your servant our father is well," they replied. "He is still alive." They bowed down in humility. **29** When Joseph looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, "Is this your youngest brother, whom you told me about?" Then he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." **30** Joseph hurried out, for he was overcome by affection for his brother and was at the point of tears. So he went to his room and wept there.

31 Then he washed his face and came out. With composure he said, "Set out the food." **32** They set a place for him, a separate place for his brothers, and another for the Egyptians who were eating with him. (The Egyptians are not able to eat with Hebrews, for the Egyptians think it is disgusting to do so.) **33** They sat before him, arranged by order of birth, beginning with the firstborn and ending with the youngest. The men looked at each other in astonishment. **34** He gave them portions of the food set before him, but the portion for Benjamin was five times greater than the portions for any of the others. They drank with Joseph until they all became drunk.

1 He instructed the servant who was over his household, "Fill the sacks of the men with as much food as they can carry and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack.

Guzik - Genesis 44:1-34

Genesis 44 - Joseph Tests His Brothers

A. Joseph sends them on their way.

1. (1-5) Joseph puts money in his brothers' bags again.

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that

Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. When they had gone out of the city, and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "

a. **As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away:** The brothers left Egypt in high spirits. They were treated well, had their sacks full of grain, and Simeon was out of prison. Their father's fear of something horrible happening would not be fulfilled.

b. **Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money:** As before, the grain sacks of the brothers are topped off by the money they paid for the grain, but this time, Joseph has his special silver cup put in the sack of Benjamin.

c. Why is Joseph doing this? Some might think he is simply using his position of power to torment his brothers in revenge for their cruelty towards him; but knowing the character of Joseph, this isn't the case. He is guided by the hand of God, testing the hearts of his brothers, and bringing them to complete repentance.

d. **He indeed practices divination:** did Joseph use the cup for divination? We know from other sources that ancients did use sacred cups as divination devices. It is possible Joseph did also, because there was not yet specific revelation from God that such a practice was forbidden. Yet, it was not Joseph who said he used the cup for divination, but his servant, who may have wrongly assumed Joseph's spiritual insight and wisdom were more due to this cup than to his relationship with the living God.

2. (6-10) The brothers claim they are innocent of theft.

So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these

words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless."

a. **Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing:** The brothers confidently stated they they did not have the cup. This shows that they had a healthy trust in each other. If they did not trust each other they would have immediately wondered which brother stole the cup.

b. **With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves:** They were so confident they did not have the cup (and trusted each other so much), they declared the thief should be killed and all the others taken as slaves.

c. **Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave:** Joseph did not repeat their offer of a death sentence because he wanted no bloodshed. But he had a plan for taking the brothers up on the suggestion of guilty parties being taken as slaves.

3. (11-13) The cup is found in Benjamin's sack.

Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

a. **The cup was found in Benjamin's sack:** The reaction of the brothers shows that this was the worst thing imaginable. Not only that the cup was found among them, but that it was in **Benjamin's sack** - their father's favorite son, the one he worried about the most. Now Benjamin was sentenced to a life of slavery in Egypt - if not death.

b. **Each man loaded his donkey and returned:** When Joseph was taken as a slave the brothers allowed him to go and thought nothing of it. Now they are willing to stand with Benjamin as he faces slavery or death. This demonstrates a significant change in the heart and attitude of Joseph's brothers.

4. (14-17) Judah commits himself and all the brothers to stick with Benjamin, even as slaves in Egypt.

So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said to them, "What deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?" Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found." But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

a. **They fell before him on the ground:** This demonstrates that the brothers were desperate to gain favor with the Egyptian official to obtain the release of Benjamin. They knew it was a real disaster to lose Benjamin and bereave their father.

b. **God has found out the iniquity of you servants:** With these words, Judah revealed God's work among the brothers. In Judah's mind, the brothers are now destined to live the rest of their lives as slaves in Egypt because they sold Joseph as a slave some 20 years before.

i. The brothers were innocent of the sin of stealing the cup but were guilty of far greater sins. In the same way, we can pride ourselves because we are innocent of some sin or another, yet we are guilty of far greater. You can't hide from your sin. Time does not erase the guilt of your sin. Only the blood of Jesus can.

ii. This resignation to slavery in Egypt is all the more significant considering these were middle-aged men who came from lives of privilege and status.

c. **Here we are, my lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found:** With these words Judah insisted that the brothers will stick by Benjamin, though he was the favored and more greatly blessed son.

If they quickly abandoned Benjamin it would show little change of heart from 20 years ago, when they abandoned Joseph.

i. There is a purpose for this even in Benjamin. Benjamin was most innocent of all, yet he still needed to be purged of all self-confidence and brought low.

B. Judah intercedes for Benjamin.

1. (18-32) Judah tells Joseph the whole story from the beginning.

Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you are even like Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' But you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go back and buy us a little food.' But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since.

But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die.

So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave.

For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.'"

a. **Then Judah came near to him and said:** Of Judah's speech, F.B. Meyer wrote: "In all literature, there is nothing more pathetic than this appeal." H.C. Leupold wrote, "This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled."

Barnhouse called it "the most moving address in all the Word of God."

b. **Surely he is torn to pieces . . . I have not seen him since:** With these carefully chosen words, Judah does not say that Benjamin's brother is dead - only that Jacob said, "**Surely he is torn to pieces**" and that Judah had not **seen him since**.

c. **When he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die:** 20 years before, Joseph's brothers showed a callous disregard of their father when reporting Joseph's "death" (Gen.

37:31-33). Judah shows they were now greatly concerned for the feelings and welfare of their father. This is more evidence of a change of heart.

2. (33-34) Judah lays down his life for Benjamin and his father.

"Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?"

a. **Please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord:** Judah dramatically offers to lay down his life for the sake of Benjamin. This is a dramatic change from 20 years before when the brothers did not care about Joseph, Benjamin, or even their father Jacob.

i. Judah shines forth as one willing to be a substitutionary sacrifice, out of love for his father and for his brethren.

b. **How shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me:** Judah was the one who suggested *selling* Joseph 20 years earlier. (Gen.

37:26-27) Here he sensitively offers to lay down his life for the favored brother. This display of sacrificial love is another example of transformation in the brothers.

i. Moses was willing to offer himself for the salvation of Israel (Exo. 32:31-32), and so was Paul (Rom. 9:1-4). Sacrificial love is evidence of our transformation (Joh. 13:34).

ii. Through this chapter there is remarkable evidence of the changed hearts of Joseph's brothers.

· They did not resent it when Benjamin was given the favored portion (Gen.

43:34)

· They trusted each other, not accusing each other of wrong when accused of stealing the cup (Gen. 44:9) · They stuck together when the silver cup was found. They did not abandon the favored son and allow him to be carried back to Egypt alone (Gen. 44:13) · They completely humbled themselves for the sake of the favored son (Gen. 44:14) · They knew their predicament was the result of their sin against Joseph (Gen.

44:16)

· They offered themselves as slaves to Egypt, not abandoning Benjamin, the favored son, their brother (Gen. 44:16) · They showed due concern for how this might affect their father (Gen. 44:29-31) · Judah was willing to be a substitutionary sacrifice for his brother out of love for his father and his brethren (Gen. 44:33) © 2006 David Guzik -

No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Then put¹ my cup – the silver cup – in the mouth of the youngest one’s sack, along with the money for his grain.” He did as Joseph instructed.²

3 When morning came,¹ the men and their donkeys were sent off.² **4** They had not gone very far from the city when Joseph said to the servant who was over his household, “Pursue the men at once! When you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid good with evil?

note **5** Doesn’t my master drink from this cup and use it for divination? You have done wrong!’”

6 When the man overtook them, he spoke these words to them. **7** They answered him, “Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing! **8** Look, the money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. Why then would we steal silver or gold from your master’s house? **9** If one of us has it, he will die, and the rest of us will become my lord’s slaves!”

10 He replied, “You have suggested your own punishment! The one who has it will become my slave, but the rest of you will go free.” **11** So each man quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. **12** Then the man searched. He began with the oldest and finished with the youngest. The cup was found in Benjamin’s sack! **13**

They all tore their clothes! Then each man loaded his donkey, and they returned to the city.

14 So Judah and his brothers came back to Joseph’s house. He was still there, and they threw themselves to the ground

before him. **15** Joseph said to them, “What did you think you were doing? Don’t you know that a man like me can find out things like this by divination?”

16 Judah replied, “What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? How can we clear ourselves? God has exposed the sin of your servants! We are now my lord’s slaves, we and the one in whose possession the cup was found.”

17 But Joseph said, “Far be it from me to do this! The man in whose hand the cup was found will become my slave, but the rest of you may go back to your father in peace.”

18 Then Judah approached him and said, “My lord, please allow your servant to speak a word with you. Please do not get angry with your servant, for you are just like Pharaoh. **19** My lord asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ **20** We said to my lord, ‘We have an aged father, and there is a young boy who was born when our father was old. The boy’s brother is dead. He is the only one of his mother’s sons left, and his father loves him.’

21 “Then you told your servants, ‘Bring him down to me so I can see him.’ **22** We said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father. If he leaves his father, his father will die.’

23 But you said to your servants, ‘If your youngest brother does not come down with you, you will not see my face again.’ **24** When we returned to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 “Then our father said, ‘Go back and buy us a little food.’

26 But we replied, ‘We cannot go down there. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go, for we won’t be permitted to see the man’s face if our youngest brother is not with us.’

27 “Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife gave me two sons. **28** The first disappeared and I said, “He has surely been torn to pieces.” I have not seen him since. **29** If you take this one from me too and an accident happens to him, then you will bring down my gray hair in tragedy to the grave.’

30 “So now, when I return to your servant my father, and the boy is not with us – his very life is bound up in his son’s life. **31** When he sees the boy is not with us, he will die, and your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father in sorrow to the grave. **32** Indeed, your servant pledged security for the boy with my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then I will bear the blame before my father all my life.’

33 “So now, please let your servant remain as my lord’s slave instead of the boy. As for the boy, let him go back with his brothers. **34** For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I couldn’t bear to see my father’s pain.”

1 Joseph was no longer able to control himself before all his attendants,¹ so he cried out, “Make everyone go out from my presence!” No one remained² with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers.

Guzik - Genesis 45:1-28

Genesis 45 - Joseph is Reunited With His

Brothers

A. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.

1. (1-3) The emotional revelation.

Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence.

a. **Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him:** Joseph ordered all the Egyptians out of the room and was then alone with his brothers. His great emotion showed Joseph did not cruelly manipulate his brothers. He was directed by God to make these arrangements and it hurt him to do it.

b. **Joseph made himself known to his brothers:** This probably means that Joseph said he was Joseph and showed his brothers that he was circumcised. Jewish legend says the brothers could never believe this high Egyptian official was Joseph unless he showed he was circumcised.

c. **But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence:** Because of the punishment they anticipated, the great emotion of Joseph, his manner of revelation, and the total shock of learning Joseph was not only alive but right in front of them, the brothers were **dismayed**. The ancient Hebrew word for **dismayed** (*bahal*) actually means, "amazed" or "frightened" or even "terrified."

i. *Come near to me* in Gen. 45:4 implies the brothers cringed back in terror. Jewish legends say the brothers were

so shocked that their souls left their bodies and it was only by a miracle of God their souls came back.

ii. Their dismay is a shadow of what will happen when the Jews see Jesus for who He is again: *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced.*

Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. (Zec. 12:10) 2. (4-8) Joseph's testimony.

And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

a. **God sent me before you to preserve life:** Joseph did not diminish what the brothers did (**whom you sold into Egypt**). Yet he saw that God's purpose in it all was greater than the evil of the brothers.

i. When we are sinned against we are tempted to fail in one or both of these areas.

We are tempted to play "let's pretend you never did it," or we are tempted to fail to see the over-arching hand of God in every circumstance.

ii. It is fair to ask, "Why *was* Joseph in Egypt? Was it because of the sin of his brothers or because of the good plan of God?" The answer is that both options are true.

b. **God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great**

deliverance: All Joseph's sorrows were for a purpose. God used them to preserve his family and provide the conditions for it to become a nation. Joseph was a victim of men, but God turned it around for His glory. None of it was for a loss.

i. If this family does not go into Egypt, then they assimilate among the pagan tribes of the Promised Land and cease to become a distinctive people. God had to put them in a place where they could grow, yet stay a distinctive nation.

ii. Rabbi Harold Kushner wrote a remarkably wide-selling book titled *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. It sold more than a half a million copies before going to paperback and was on the *New York Times* best-seller list for a whole year. The whole point of his book is to say God is all loving but not all powerful, that God is good, but not sovereign. So, when bad things happen to good people, it is because events are out of God's control. Kushner advises his readers to "learn to love [God] and forgive him despite his limitations." This certainly is not the God of the Bible!

c. **So now it was not you who sent me here, but God:** Joseph realized *God* ruled his life, not good men, evil men, circumstances, or fate. God was in control, and because God was in control all things worked together for good.

B. Joseph sends his brothers home.

1. (9-15) Joseph tells his brothers to go home and to bring their father and find protection from the famine.

"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry.

You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.'" And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that

you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

a. **Thus says your son Joseph:** When Jacob heard this it was one of the greatest days of his life. He had the joy of learning that the favored son, who will save his brethren, who was given up for dead, is now alive.

b. **He kissed all his brothers and wept over them:** Joseph did not exclude those who had been especially cruel to him. His heart was open to his brothers both as a group and as individuals.

c. **After that his brothers talked with him:** This was a wonderful conversation. There was a lot to catch up on.

2. (16-24) Pharaoh and Joseph send the brothers home with many gifts.

Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. Now you are commanded; do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.'" Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. He gave to all of them, to each man, changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments. And he sent to his father these things: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. So he sent his brothers away, and

they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

a. **Joseph gave them carts, according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey:** The sons of Israel received transportation, provision, garments, and riches because of who their favored brother was. Pharaoh blessed the sons of Jacob for Joseph's sake.

i. "To return to Canaan with 'carts from Egypt' was the cultural equivalent of landing a jumbo jet among a tribe of isolated savages. It would be the stuff legends are made of." (Boice)

b. **See that you do not become troubled along the way:** The idea behind the words " **become troubled**" is literally *become angry* or *quarrel*. Joseph knew as soon as these men left his presence they would be tempted to act in selfish, unspiritual ways. They had to anticipate and guard against this.

3. (25-28) Jacob hears the good news - that Joseph lives.

Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived. Then Israel said, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

a. **He did not believe them:** Jacob was told Joseph was dead and believed it. Then he was told Joseph was alive, and he did not believe it until his sons told him the words of Joseph and showed him the blessings that came to them through Joseph. Then he believed Joseph was alive, though he had not yet seen him.

i. The only way people will know Jesus is alive is if we tell them His words and show them His blessings in our lives.

b. It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive: Knowing that the favored son was alive - back from the dead, as it were - changed Israel's testimony from *all these things are against me* (Gen. 42:36) to **it is enough**.

i. This testimony of faith comes from **Israel**, not *Jacob*. When Jacob was in charge, we saw a whining, self-pitying, complaining, unbelieving type of man. But Israel, the man God conquered, had a testimony of *faith*.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He wept loudly;¹ the Egyptians heard it and Pharaoh's household heard about it.²

3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" His brothers could not answer him because they were dumbfounded before him. **4** Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me," so they came near. Then he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt." **5** Now, do not be upset and do not be angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me ahead of you to preserve life! **6** For these past two years there has been famine in the land and for five more years there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. **7** God sent me ahead of you to preserve you on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. **8** So now, it is not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me an adviser to Pharaoh, lord over all his household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Now go up to my father quickly and tell him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: "God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not delay!"' **10** You will live in the land of Goshen, and you will be near me - you, your children, your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and everything you have. **11** I will provide you with food there because there will be five more years of famine. Otherwise you would become poor - you, your household, and everyone who belongs to you.'" **12** You and my brother Benjamin can certainly see with your own eyes that I really am the one who speaks to you. **13** So tell my father about all my honor

in Egypt and about everything you have seen. But bring my father down here quickly!”

14 Then he threw himself on the neck of his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. **15**

He kissed all his brothers and wept over them. After this his brothers talked with him.

16 Now it was reported in the household of Pharaoh, “Joseph’s brothers have arrived.” It pleased Pharaoh and his servants. **17** Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers,

‘Do this: Load your animals and go to the land of Canaan! **18**

Get your father and your households and come to me! Then I will give you the best land in Egypt and you will eat the best of the land.’ **19**

You are also commanded to say, ‘Do this: Take for yourselves wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives. Bring your father and come. **20**

Don’t worry about your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt will be yours.’”

21 So the sons of Israel did as he said. Joseph gave them wagons as Pharaoh had instructed, and he gave them provisions for the journey. **22**

He gave sets of clothes to each one of them, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five sets of clothes. **23**

To his father he sent the following: ten donkeys loaded with the best products of Egypt and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, food, and provisions for his father’s journey. **24**

Then he sent his brothers on their way and they left. He said to them, “As you travel don’t be overcome with fear.”

25 So they went up from Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. **26**

They told him, “Joseph is still alive and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt!” Jacob was stunned, for he did not believe them. **27**

But when they related to him everything Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to transport him, their father Jacob’s spirit revived. **28**

Then Israel said, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive! I will go and see him before I die.”

1 So Israel began his journey, taking with him all that he had.¹ When he came to Beer Sheba² he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

Guzik - Genesis 46:1-34

Genesis 46 - The Family of Jacob Comes to Egypt

A. The family comes to Egypt.

1. (1-4) God speaks to Jacob on the way to Egypt.

So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" And he said, "Here I am." So He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."

a. **Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba:** This was the southernmost outpost of the Promised Land on the way to Egypt. He stopped there to honor God with sacrifices.

i. Both Abraham (Gen. 22:19) and Isaac (Gen. 26:23) lived for a time at Beersheba.

ii. Israel's grandfather Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba many years before and had called on the name of the LORD there (Gen. 21:33). Isaac received a special promise from God and built an altar for sacrifice there, calling on the name of the LORD (Gen. 26:24-25). It was probably at this very place Israel sacrificed.

b. **God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night:** More than 40 years before, when Jacob was about to leave the Promised Land, God spoke to him in a dream (Gen. 28:12-17). Now, when he is about to leave the land again, God brings reassurance through a dream again.

c. **Do not fear to go down to Egypt:** This indicates that Israel was afraid to go to Egypt.

Jacob may have remembered Abraham had gone to Egypt in a time of famine once before, and it was a manifestation of

his unbelief, and much evil eventually came from it (Gen. 12:10-20). He also may have remembered God told his father Isaac not to go down to Egypt (Gen. 26:2).

i. Also, Jacob knew God told Abraham that his descendants would *be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years* (Gen. 15:13). As Jacob led his family into this foreign land, he did not know what the future held. At the same time, he knew the future was in God's hands.

d. **I will make of you a great nation there:** God told Israel what His purpose was in bringing this large family or clan down to Egypt.

Because of the exclusive, segregated nature of Egyptian life, Israel's descendants could grow as a large, distinct nation there. Egypt will become a "mother's womb" to Israel as a nation.

2. (5-27) Listing of Jacob's family who came with him to Egypt.

Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the carts which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. His sons and his sons'

sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

Now these were the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben was Jacob's firstborn. The sons of Reuben were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. The sons of Levi were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The sons of Judah were Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and

Hamul. The sons of Issachar were Tola, Puvah, Job, and Shimron. The sons of Zebulun were Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, were thirty-three. The sons of Gad were Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli. The sons of Asher were Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel. These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.

The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife, were Joseph and Benjamin. And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. The sons of Benjamin were Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muphim, Huphim, and Ard. These were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all. The son of Dan was Hushim. The sons of Naphtali were Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem. These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all. All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob's sons' wives, were sixty-six persons in all. And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

a. **All his descendants he brought with him to Egypt:**

This shows the great faith Israel had.

He brought the *entire* family down to Egypt. No one was left behind to continue a presence in Canaan. Jacob *knew* they would be back.

b. **The sons of Judah were:** The sons of Judah are of special note because this is the Messianic lineage. The line of descent so far goes like this: Abraham - Isaac - Jacob - Judah -

Perez - Hezron (Luk. 3:33-34).

c. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy: The total number of males of this clan was 70 - 66, plus Jacob himself, Joseph, and his two sons. This large family will become a nation of more than two million over the next 400 years.

i. Like many great works of God, Israel had a slow beginning.
· From the time God called Abraham, it took at least 25 years to add one son -

Isaac

· It took Isaac 60 years to add another son of Israel - Jacob

· It took 50 or 60 years for Jacob to add 12 sons and one daughter · But in 430 years, Israel will leave Egypt with 600,000 men

· It took this family 215 years to grow from one to 70, but in another 430 years they grew to two million.

ii. In Act. 7:14 Stephen says that there were 75 who went into Egypt. This is because Stephen quoted from the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which says 75. The number in the Septuagint is not wrong, just arrived at in a different way, specifically adding five more sons (or grandsons) of Joseph born in Egypt.

B. The family settles in the land of Goshen.

1. (28-30) The emotional meeting between Joseph and his father.

Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way to Goshen. And they came to the land of Goshen. So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."

a. Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out before him the way: It was fitting for Judah, of the Messianic line, to escort Israel into Goshen, the land of abundance.

b. **Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive:** This reunion of Israel with Joseph is more than he ever dreamed before. This is a dramatic change from *all things are against me* (Gen. 42:36).

2. (31-34) Joseph tells his family of the plan to ask for the area of Goshen.

Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. And the men are shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

a. **Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians:** The Egyptians were agricultural in the sense of farming crops. They considered sheep unclean, and therefore detested shepherds.

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2 God spoke to Israel in a vision during the night¹ and said, "Jacob, Jacob!" He replied, "Here I am!"

3 He said, "I am God,¹ the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. **4** I will go down with you to Egypt and I myself will certainly bring you back from there. Joseph will close your eyes." **5** Then Jacob started out from Beer Sheba, and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little children, and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent along to transport him. **6** Jacob and all his descendants took their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they went to Egypt. **7** He brought

with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters – all his descendants.

8 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt – Jacob and his sons: Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob.

9 The sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

10 The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul (the son of a Canaanite woman).

11 The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan).

The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

13 The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

14 The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

15 These were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram, along with Dinah his daughter. His sons and daughters numbered thirty-three in all.

16 The sons of Gad: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.

17 The sons of Asher: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and Serah their sister.

The sons of Beriah were Heber and Malkiel.

18 These were the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter. She bore these to Jacob, sixteen in all.

19 The sons of Rachel the wife of Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin.

20 Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt. Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore them to him.

21 The sons of Benjamin: Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.

22 These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob, fourteen in all.

23 The son of Dan: Hushim.

24 The sons of Naphtali: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

25 These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter. She bore these to Jacob, seven in all.

26 All the direct descendants of Jacob who went to Egypt with him were sixty-six in number. (This number does not include the wives of Jacob's sons.) **27** Counting the two sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt, all the people of the household of Jacob who were in Egypt numbered seventy.

28 Jacob sent Judah before him to Joseph to accompany him to Goshen. So they came to the land of Goshen. **29**

Joseph harnessed his chariot and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. When he met him, he hugged his neck and wept on his neck for quite some time.

30 Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive." **31** Then Joseph said to his brothers and his father's household, "I will go up and tell Pharaoh, 'My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Canaan have come to me. **32** The men are shepherds; they take care of livestock. They have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.'

33 Pharaoh will summon you and say, 'What is your occupation?' **34** Tell him, 'Your servants have taken care of cattle from our youth until now, both we and our fathers,' so that you may live in the land of Goshen, for everyone who takes care of sheep is disgusting to the Egyptians."

1 Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father, my brothers, their flocks and herds, and all that they own have arrived from the land of Canaan. They are now¹ in the land of Goshen."

Guzik - Genesis 47:1-31

Genesis 47 - Jacob Meets Pharaoh; the Family

Settles In Egypt

A. Jacob meets Pharaoh.

1. (1-4) The brothers ask for the land of Goshen.

Then Joseph went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen." And he took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers." And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen."

2. (5-6) Pharaoh gives them the best of the land.

Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. The land of Egypt is before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell in the land of Goshen. And if you know any competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."

a. **Dwell in the best of the land:** This blessing is all because of Joseph. He saved Egypt - and much of the world - from terrible famine, and now the whole family of Israel is blessed and received an inheritance because of Joseph.

3. (7-10) Jacob blesses Pharaoh.

Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?" And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the

days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." So Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

a. **The days of the years of my pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years:** Jacob confessed he was on a **pilgrimage**. He knew that his real home was somewhere else: heaven.

b. **Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life:** This was not a cynical statement by Jacob. He recognized that the general character of his life (lived in the flesh) and the length of his life did not compare both to eternity and to the lives of his ancestors.

c. **So Jacob blessed Pharaoh:** Pharaoh acknowledged Jacob was a man of God by accepting his blessing. In the Egyptian religion, Pharaoh himself was thought to be a god. They considered Pharaoh the human embodiment of Ra, the sun god. This means that it was remarkable that he allowed Israel to bestow a blessing on him.

4. (11-12) Israel takes the best of the land.

And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. Then Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in their families.

a. **Joseph situated his father and his brothers:** The family of Israel looked to Joseph, and Joseph only, as their source of provision and supply.

B. Joseph deals with the famine.

1. (13-14) In the early years of the famine, money poured into the treasury of Egypt, because it was the only place to buy food.

Now there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of

Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

2. (15-26) In the later years of the famine, Joseph arranged ways for the people to purchase food with whatever they have to give.

So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed." Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone." So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year. When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock.

There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land may not be desolate." Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he moved them into the cities, from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. Only the land of the priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations allotted to them by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands. Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, here is seed for you, and you shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for

those of your households and as food for your little ones." So they said, "You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's.

a. **So the land became Pharaoh's:** In the process, the power and wealth of Pharaoh was multiplied greatly. In times of national crisis the power of central government often increases.

b. **In the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh:** Joseph wasn't unfair. He fed the people when they would have starved, and in return asked for one-fifth (20%) annually from the produce of the land. Many people today would be happy with only a 20% tax.

C. Israel anticipates his death.

1. (27) The multiplication of the family of Israel.

So Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and grew and multiplied exceedingly.

a. **Grew and multiplied exceedingly:** This was certainly true. In some 400 years, this became a nation of some two million or more people.

b. **Multiplied exceedingly:** Henry Morris calculates the initial group of five (Jacob and his four wives) grew into a clan of about 100 in 50

years (the 100 includes the 70 of Gen. 46:27

plus a few wives of the sons not mentioned and grandchildren). That is a growth rate of just over 6% per year. At that rate, there would be several million descendants by the time of the Exodus 430 years later.

2. (28-31) Israel makes Joseph vow to bury him in Canaan.

And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in

your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me.

Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." And he said, "I will do as you have said." Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

a. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but let me lie with my fathers: Israel knew Egypt was not his home. He belonged in the land promised to he and his descendants. He clearly believed and understood he was the inheritor of Abraham's covenant.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He took five of his brothers and introduced them to Pharaoh.¹

3 Pharaoh said to Joseph's¹ brothers, "What is your occupation?" They said to Pharaoh, "Your servants take care of flocks, just as our ancestors did."² **4** Then they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to live as temporary residents in the land. There is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. So now, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen."

5 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. **6** The land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best region of the land. They may live in the land of Goshen. If you know of any highly capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."

7 Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and presented him before Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh. **8** Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How long have you lived?" **9** Jacob said to Pharaoh, "All the years of my travels are 130. All the years of my life have been few and painful; the years of my travels are not as long as those of my ancestors." **10** Then Jacob blessed Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

11 So Joseph settled his father and his brothers. He gave them territory in the land of Egypt, in the best region of the land, the land of Rameses, just as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 Joseph also provided food for his father, his brothers, and all his father's household, according to the number of their little children.

13 But there was no food in all the land because the famine was very severe; the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan wasted away because of the famine. **14** Joseph collected all the money that could be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan as payment for the grain they were buying. Then Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's palace. **15** When the money from the lands of Egypt and Canaan was used up, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food! Why should we die before your very eyes because our money has run out?"

16 Then Joseph said, "If your money is gone, bring your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." **17** So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for their horses, the livestock of their flocks and herds, and their donkeys.

He got them through that year by giving them food in exchange for livestock.

18 When that year was over, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We cannot hide from our lord that the money is used up and the livestock and the animals belong to our lord. Nothing remains before our lord except our bodies and our land. **19** Why should we die before your very eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we, with our land, will become Pharaoh's slaves. Give us seed that we may live and not die. Then the land will not become desolate."

20 So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. Each of the Egyptians sold his field, for the famine was severe. So the land became Pharaoh's. **21** Joseph made all the people slaves from one end of Egypt's border to the

other end of it. **22** But he did not purchase the land of the priests because the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh and they ate from their allotment that Pharaoh gave them.

That is why they did not sell their land.

23 Joseph said to the people, "Since I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you.

Cultivate the land. **24** When you gather in the crop, give one-fifth of it to Pharaoh, and the rest will be yours for seed for the fields and for you to eat, including those in your households and your little children." **25** They replied, "You have saved our lives! You are showing us favor, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves."

26 So Joseph made it a statute, which is in effect to this day throughout the land of Egypt: One-fifth belongs to Pharaoh. Only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.

27 Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen, and they owned land there. They were fruitful and increased rapidly in number.

28 Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; the years of Jacob's life were 147 in all. **29** The time for Israel to die approached, so he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, **30** but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." Joseph said, "I will do as you say."

31 Jacob said, "Swear to me that you will do so." So Joseph gave him his word. Then Israel bowed down at the head of his bed.

1 After these things Joseph was told,¹ "Your father is weakening." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.

Guzik - Genesis 48:1-22

Genesis 48 - Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

A. Jacob calls for his sons.

1. (1-4) Jacob's remembers God's promise.

Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father is sick"; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed.

Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, 'Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.' "

a. **God Almighty appeared to me at Luz:** Luz is another name for Bethel, where Jacob first met God. Jacob vividly remembered this outstanding encounter with the LORD.

b. **Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you:** Jacob's phrasing is reminiscent of exact promises God made to Abraham in Genesis 17 (see Gen. 17:2, 17:6, and 17:8).

Abraham was careful to pass down the exact words of God's covenant with him to the inheritors of the covenant, because the exact words of God were important.

2. (5-6) Jacob adopts Joseph's sons as his own.

"And now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your offspring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance."

a. **As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine:** Reuben and Simeon were the first and second born of Israel. Jacob receives the two sons of Joseph as adopted into the family at the highest level (as if they were the first and second born).

i. And, perhaps, they are "replacements" for Reuben and Simeon, who were in a sense disqualified from positions of status and leadership in Israel's family because of their sin (Gen. 34:25, 35:22).

b. **They shall be mine:** Jacob's adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim explains why there are 12 tribes often listed in

different combinations.

Because of this adoption, there are actually 13 sons of Israel. The 12 were born, but Joseph was divided into two tribes.

i. Therefore as the tribes are listed through the Old Testament, they can be juggled and still remain 12 tribes. There are more than 20 different ways of listing the tribes in the Old Testament.

ii. As a number, 12 is often associated with government or administration in God's eyes.

There are 12 tribes, 12 apostles, 12 princes of Ishmael, 12 pillars on Moses' altar, 12

stones on the high priest's breastplate, 12

cakes of showbread, 12 silver platters, silver bowls, and gold pans for the service of the tabernacle, 12 spies to search out the land, 12 memorial stones, 12 governors under Solomon, 12 stones in Elijah's altar, 12 in each group of musicians and singers for Israel's worship, 12 hours in a day, 12

months in a year, 12 Ephesian men filled with the Holy Spirit, 12,000 from 12 tribes sealed and preserved through the tribulation, heaven has 12 gates of 12

pearls, and 12 angels at the gates, the New Jerusalem has 12 foundations, each with the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb, its length, breadth, and height are all 12,000

furlongs, and the tree of life in heaven has 12 fruits. The number 12 is special to God.

3. (7) Jacob concludes his testimony with an eye to his soon death.

"But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

B. Jacob blesses Manasseh and Ephraim.

1. (8-12) Jacob calls for Joseph's sons, to bless them.

Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?"

And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God

has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them." Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see.

Then Joseph brought them near him, and he kissed them and embraced them. And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!" So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth.

a. **He bowed down with his face to the earth:** Joseph lived his own life as a high official of Egypt for many years, and had no contact with his father during that time. Yet it has not diminished the reverence he has towards his father.

2. (13-14) Jacob puts the favored hand on the second-born, despite Joseph's efforts.

And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near him. Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

a. **Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand:** The **right hand** in the Bible always has the idea of the favored position because generally speaking, the right hand is the hand of strength and skill.

i. The right hand is associated with God's strength (Exo. 15:6), favor (Psa. 16:11), and help (Psa. 20:6). This is why Jesus is described as sitting at the *right hand* of God the Father (Mar. 14:62).

b. **Guiding his hands knowingly:** Israel knew exactly what he intended to do. He deliberately chose the second-born to receive a greater blessing than the firstborn.

3. (15-16) The blessing of Jacob upon Manasseh and Ephraim.

And he blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me

all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; let my name be named upon them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

a. **And he blessed Joseph:** Israel gave the same blessing to both sons, but the son of the right hand received a greater proportion of the blessing.

i. This was fulfilled in Israel's history. Both tribes were blessed, but Ephraim was greater as a tribe, even to the point where the name "Ephraim" was used to refer to the whole northern nation of Israel (see examples in Isa. 7:8, 7:17, and 11:13).

b. **The God who has fed me all my life long to this day:** Jacob's testimony was a testimony of grace, not personal merit. He was not saying how faithful he was to God, but how faithful God was to him.

i. The phrase, "**the God who has fed me**" is literally "The God who has shepherded me." This is the first mention in the Bible of God as a *shepherd* to His people.

4. (17-20) Jacob answers Joseph's objection about the order of blessing.

Now when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head." But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations." So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

a. **This one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head:** As the two sons of Joseph stood before Israel, the older (**Manasseh**) was before Israel's right hand and the

younger (**Ephraim**) was before Israel's left hand. Joseph positioned them intentionally so the older could receive the **right hand** blessing according to custom. Yet Isaac deliberately crossed his hands and put his right hand on Ephraim's head and his left hand on Manasseh's head.

b. **For this one is the firstborn . . . truly his younger brother shall be greater than he:** Ephraim was not the **firstborn** but God chose him to take the *position* of firstborn. Jer. 31:9

describes this: *For I am a Father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn* (Jer. 31:9).

i. This shows how the idea of "firstborn" in the Bible is often a position of pre-eminence, not necessarily meaning "first out of the womb."

ii. David had the position of firstborn, even though he was the youngest son (1Sa. 16:11 and Psalms 89:27).

iii. Jesus has the pre-eminent position of firstborn (Col. 1:15), though this does not mean Jesus was literally the first "born" creature of God, because Jesus was not created.

5. (21-22) Jacob makes a personal bequest to Joseph.

Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to you one portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

a. **Behold, I am dying:** This is truly a passing of the torch to Joseph. Israel was the last of the three great patriarchs to pass from the scene.

i. "If Abraham dies, there is Isaac; and if Isaac dies, there is Jacob; and if Jacob dies, there is Joseph; and if Joseph dies, Ephraim and Manasseh survive. The Lord shall never lack a champion to bear his standard high among the sons of men. Only let us pray God to raise up more faithful ministers day and night. We have plenty of a sort, but, oh, for more that will weigh out sixteen ounces to the pound of gospel in such

a way that people will receive it. We have too much of fine language, too much of florid eloquence, and little full and plain gospel preaching, but God will keep up the apostolic succession, never fear of that. When Stephen is dying, Paul is not far off. When Elijah is taken up, he leaves his mantle behind him." (Spurgeon)

b. **One portion above your brothers:** This refers to Joseph being father of two tribes, while each of his brothers only fathered one.

c. **Which I took from the hand of the Amorite:** Apparently, while still in Canaan, Jacob battled for control of a portion of land from the Amorites, and he deeded the land to Joseph and his descendants. The descendants of Joseph would take this land some 400 years later.

d. **God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers:** This completes a wonderful work regarding Jacob's recognition of God's presence his life.

I am with you (Gen. 28:15): God gives the 1

young believer every possible assurance of His presence and grace

I will be with you (Gen. 31:3): God expects 2

the growing believer to trust He will be with us, even when we only have the promise of His presence

God . . . has been with me (Gen. 31:5): God 3

gives a glorious testimony to the mature believer, able to say how God has been with us, even when we haven't felt His presence in the way we wished

God will be with you (Gen. 48:21): God 4

gives the mature believer the opportunity to encourage others with the promise of God's presence

C. Joseph as a picture of Jesus (list continued from the end of Genesis 41).

35. His brethren were driven out of their own land.

36. In his second appearing, he did not first go to his brothers; they came to him.

37. He knew his brethren even while unknown and unrecognized by them.

38. He blessed his brethren without their knowledge.
39. He wanted *all* of his brethren to come to him.
40. There was a significant time gap between his initial relationship with his brothers and his second relationship to his brothers.
41. He his brothers a way of deliverance through substitution.
42. His "second coming" to his brothers had two appearances. He made himself known to his brethren at his second appearing to them.
43. He was revealed as a man of compassion.
44. His brothers repented of rejecting him, with great wonder and tears.
45. He allowed no fellowship (as in eating together) until his brothers repented and he revealed himself.
46. His brethren went forth to proclaim his glory.
47. He made provision for his brethren.
48. He prepared a place for his brethren, and he received them into it.
49. He brought Jew and Gentile together in the land.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When Jacob was told,¹ "Your son Joseph has just²

come to you," Israel regained strength and sat up on his bed. **3** Jacob said to Joseph, "The sovereign God¹ appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me. **4** He said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and will multiply you. I will make you into a group of nations, and I will give this land to your descendants as an everlasting possession.' **5** "Now, as for your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, they will be mine. Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine just as Reuben and Simeon are. **6** Any children that you father after them will be yours; they will be listed under the names of their brothers in their inheritance. **7** But as for me, when I was returning from Paddan, Rachel died – to my sorrow – in

the land of Canaan. It happened along the way, some distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there on the way to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he asked, "Who are these?"

9 Joseph said to his father, "They are the sons God has given me in this place." His father said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them." **10** Now Israel's eyes were failing because of his age; he was not able to see well. So Joseph brought his sons near to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see you again, but now God has allowed me to see your children too."

12 So Joseph moved them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. **13** Joseph positioned them; he put Ephraim on his right hand across from Israel's left hand, and Manasseh on his left hand across from Israel's right hand. Then Joseph brought them closer to his father.

14 Israel stretched out his right hand and placed it on Ephraim's head, although he was the younger. Crossing his hands, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, for Manasseh was the firstborn.

15 Then he blessed Joseph and said, "May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked – the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day, **16** the Angel who has protected me from all harm – bless these boys.

May my name be named in them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac.

May they grow into a multitude on the earth."

17 When Joseph saw that his father placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him. So he took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head.

18 Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."

19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a nation and he too will become great. In spite of this, his younger brother will be even greater and his

descendants will become a multitude of nations.” **20** So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you will Israel bless, saying, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.’” So he put Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, “I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. **22** As one who is above your brothers, I give to you the mountain slope, which I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow.”

1 Jacob called for his sons and said, “Gather together so I can tell you¹ what will happen to you in the future.²

Guzik - Genesis 49:1-33

Genesis 49 - The Blessing of the Sons of Jacob

A. The cryptic blessings.

1. (1-2) What will **befall** the sons of Jacob in the **last days**.

And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father."

a. **Jacob called his sons:** Jacob, in what amounts to his last significant act as a patriarch and as the heir to Isaac and Abraham, will one-by-one pronounce a "blessing" upon each son.

b. **What shall befall you in the last days:** Some of these are not so much "blessings" as they are prophecies regarding what God will do with these tribes in the future.

i. This is the first conscious prophecy spoken by man in the Bible. There were many prophecies announced by God (such as the promise of the triumph of the seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15), and other veiled prophecies by men, but this is the first *knowing* prophecy of the Bible.

ii. Jewish traditions say as Jacob was about to bless his sons, he was ready to tell them the "great secret concerning the end of time." But at that moment, the glory of God visited and left just as quickly, taking all trace of the knowledge of the great mystery, so he couldn't tell them.

c. **You sons of Jacob, and listen to Israel your father:**

At the very beginning of the blessing, Jacob realized he was both **Jacob** and **Israel**, and his sons are sons of each. This was a place of spiritual maturity, realizing both what God made him (**Israel**) and what he had to battle against (**Jacob**).

2. (3-4) Reuben: **You shall not excel.**

"Reuben, you are my firstborn, My might and the beginning of my strength, The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.

Unstable as water, you shall not excel, Because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it; He went up to my couch."

a. **You are my firstborn:** As the firstborn of the family Reuben had claim to the inheritance rights of the firstborn, but he forfeited it through pride (**The excellency of dignity**) and immorality (**you defiled it**).

i. Reuben's immorality with his father's concubine Bilhah (the mother of his brothers Dan and Naphtali) is recorded in Gen. 35:22.

b. **Unstable as water, you shall not excel:** Because of Reuben's instability the birthright ends up being divided. Usually the firstborn was the spiritual and social leader of the "clan"; but the rights of *blessing, priesthood, and ruling authority* were divided among the sons of Israel rather than being centralized in one.

i. Though we see the great wisdom of God in "decentralizing" authority among the sons of Israel, Reuben paid a high price for his instability. As much as anything, God looks for stable character in those who will lead His people.

c. **You shall not excel:** The tribe of Reuben never did excel. No prophet, no judge, or no king came from the tribe of Reuben. Reuben is a great example of how the first can be last (Mat. 19:30).

3. (5-7) Simeon and Levi: **I will . . . scatter them in Israel.**

"Simeon and Levi are brothers; Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.

Let not my soul enter their council; Let not my honor be united to their assembly; For in their anger they slew a man, And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.

Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel!

I will divide them in Jacob And scatter them in Israel."

a. **Simeon and Levi are brothers:** The second-born son Simeon and the third-born son Levi received the same "blessing" for the same evil deed. They were **instruments of cruelty** when they wiped out all the men of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah (Gen. 34:25-29).

i. Jacob, perhaps in weakness, did nothing at the time except register a small, self-centered complaint (Gen. 34:30). Yet he (and the LORD) remembered this event.

ii. The sins of our past can come back and haunt us. Even when forgiven, they may carry consequences we must face for a lifetime.

b. **Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce:** The real problem with Simeon and Levi was their **anger (in their anger they slew a man)**. Their anger was sin because it was rooted in **self-will (in their self-will they hamstrung an ox)**.

i. The Bible speaks of a godly anger (*Be angry and do not sin*, Eph. 4:26) and an ungodly anger (*Let all bitterness, wrath, anger . . . be put away from you*, Eph.

4:31). Often, the difference between a godly, righteous anger and an ungodly anger is *self-will*.

c. **I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel:** The prophecy of dividing and scattering turned out to be a *curse* for Simeon.

The tribe of Simeon was the weakest numerically of the 12 (Num. 26:14) and shared an allotment of land with Judah

(Jos. 19:1).

i. In fact, the tribe of Simeon became small during the wilderness wanderings. They started out from Egypt being the third largest tribe (Num. 1:23), but some 35 years later, at the second wilderness census of Israel, 63% of the tribe perished and they became the smallest tribe (Num. 26:14).

d. **I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel:** The prophecy of dividing and scattering became a *blessing* for Levi. Because of the faithfulness of this tribe during the rebellion of the golden calf (Exo. 32:26-28), it was scattered as a blessing throughout the whole nation of Israel. They received no large tract of land, for the LORD was their inheritance, not land (Jos. 13:33).

i. So both Simeon and Levi were scattered, but one as a blessing and the other as a curse.

ii. Washington Irving, the American writer, said: "It lightens the stroke to draw near to him who handles the rod." When we suffer from our sin, we should draw near to God and anticipate that in mercy He will turn suffering into blessing.

4. (8-12) Judah: **The scepter shall not depart from Judah.**

"Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you.

Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes;

And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Binding his donkey to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, And his clothes in the blood of grapes.

His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk."

a. Judah, you are he whom your brothers shall praise:

Judah wasn't a completely exemplary character. He suggested a profit motive in getting rid of Joseph (Gen. 37:26). He did not deal faithfully with his daughter-in-law Tamar (Gen. 38:26), and he had sex with her as a prostitute (Gen. 38:18). But he did shine when he interceded and offered himself as a substitute for Joseph (Gen. 44:18-34). Overall, this blessing is an example of the riches of God's grace.

i. Jewish tradition says after Judah heard what Jacob had to say to Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, he was afraid because of the evil he did.

b. You are he whom your brothers shall praise . . . as a lion . . . the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet . . . to Him shall be the obedience of the people: Each of these refer to the *ruling* position Judah will have among his brethren. He inherited the leadership aspect of the firstborn's inheritance.

i. In Rev. 5:5, Jesus is called *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*.

ii. "The firstborn normally had two rights.

First, he became the leader of the family, the new patriarch. Second, he was entitled to a double share of the inheritance, receiving twice as much as any of the other brothers." (Boice)

c. Until Shiloh comes: The "leadership"

prophecy took some 640 years to fulfill in part (with the reign of David, first of Judah's dynasty of kings), and some 1600 years to fulfill in Jesus. Jesus is referred to as **Shiloh**, the name meaning, "He whose right it is" and a title anciently understood to speak of the Messiah.

i. From David until the Herods, a prince of Judah was head over Israel (even Daniel in captivity). The promise was that Israel would keep this **scepter** until **Shiloh comes**. Even under their foreign masters during this period, Israel had a limited right to self-rule, until 7 A.D. Then under Herod and

the Romans, their right to capital punishment was taken away.

ii. At the time, the rabbis considered it a disaster of unfulfilled Scripture. Seemingly, the last vestige of the **scepter** had passed from Judah, and they did not see the Messiah. Rabbis walked the streets of Jerusalem and said, "Woe unto us, for the scepter has been taken away from Judah, and Shiloh has not come." Yet God's word had not been broken.

iii. Certainly, Jesus was alive then. Perhaps this was the very year He was 12 years old and discussed God's Word in the temple with the scholars of His day. Perhaps He impressed them with His understanding of this very issue.

c. **Binding his donkey to the vine:** This blessing also contains a description of Judah's material abundance (**the vine . . . the choice vine**). Judah's land was great wine-growing country.

5. (13) Zebulun: **A haven for ships.**

"Zebulun shall dwell by the haven of the sea; He shall become a haven for ships, And his border shall adjoin Sidon."

a. **Zebulun:** Jacob now skipped the birth order, moving to the tenth-born and ninth-born sons, but staying with the sons born of Leah.

i. The tribe of Zebulun was noted for its faithfulness to David, supplying the largest number of soldiers to David's army of any single tribe: *of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, stouthearted men who could keep ranks* (1Ch. 12:33).

b. **He shall become a haven for ships:** The tribe of Zebulun seems to settle the piece of land sitting between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Literally, **shall dwell by the haven of the sea** can be rendered "looking towards the sea." Zebulun did look to the sea, both to the East and West.

6. (14-15) Issachar: **A strong donkey.**

"Issachar is a strong donkey, Lying down between two burdens; He saw that rest was good, And that the land was pleasant; He bowed his shoulder to bear a burden, And became a band of slaves."

a. **Issachar is a strong donkey:** Issachar was a large tribe - third in size according to the Numbers 26 census. Because of their size and abundance, they were often targets of oppressive foreign armies who put them into servitude. Thus, they **became a band of slaves.**

i. "The meaning seems to be that Issachar was strong, but docile and lazy. He would enjoy the good land assigned him but would not strive for it. Therefore, eventually he would be pressed into servitude and the mere bearing of burdens for his masters." (Leupold)

7. (16-18) Dan: **A serpent by the way.**

"Dan shall judge his people As one of the tribes of Israel.

Dan shall be a serpent by the way, A viper by the path, That bites the horse's heels So that its rider shall fall backward.

I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!"

a. **Dan shall judge his people:** The tribe of Dan did **judge his people.** They supplied one of the most prominent of the Judges, Samson (Jdg. 13:2).

b. **Dan shall be a serpent by the way:** But Dan was a troublesome tribe. They introduced idolatry into Israel (Jdg. 18:30). Jeroboam set up one of his idolatrous golden calves in Dan (1Ki. 12:26-30) and later Dan became a center of idol worship in Israel (Amo. 8:14).

i. Some think the **serpent by the way** refers to the idea that the Antichrist comes from the tribe of Dan (based on Dan. 11:37

and Jer. 8:16).

ii. Dan is left *out* of the listing of tribes regarding the 144,000 in Rev. 7:5-8. But Dan is the *first* tribe listed in Ezekiel's millennial roll call of the tribes (Ezekiel 48).

This is a remarkable sign of God's redemption.

c. I have waited for your salvation, O

LORD: The Hebrew word for **salvation** is " *yeshuwah*." At this point in the prophecy, when Jacob is so near death, he called out for God's salvation. He called out for Jesus.

8. (19) Gad: **He shall triumph at last.**

"Gad, a troop shall tramp upon him, But he shall triumph at last."

a. **Gad:** The tribe of Gad supplied many fine troops for David (1Ch. 12:14).

b. **A troop shall tramp upon him:** In the days of Jeremiah (among other times) foreign armies oppressed Gad (Jer. 49:1).

9. (20) Asher: **He shall yield royal dainties.**

"Bread from Asher shall be rich, And he shall yield royal dainties."

a. **Bread from Asher shall be rich:** In Deu.

33:24, Moses again took up this prophecy regarding Asher: *Asher is most blessed of sons; let him be favored by his brothers, and let him dip his foot in oil.*

10. (21) Naphtali: **He gives goodly words.**

"Naphtali is a deer let loose; He uses beautiful words."

a. **Naphtali:** Naphtali's land was in a key portion near the Sea of Galilee, the region where Jesus did much of His teaching and ministry. It is fittingly said of him that **he gives goodly words.**

i. *Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned" (Mat. 4:12-16).*

11. (22-26) Joseph: **A fruitful bough.**

"Joseph is a fruitful bough, A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall.

The archers have bitterly grieved him, Shot at him and hated him.

But his bow remained in strength, And the arms of his hands were made strong By the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel), By the God of your father who will help you, And by the Almighty who will bless you With blessings of heaven above, Blessings of the deep that lies beneath, Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.

The blessings of your father Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors, Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

They shall be on the head of Joseph, And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers."

a. **Joseph is a fruitful bough:** This is more of an accounting of his life and a personal blessing. In a sense, Joseph's tribes were already blessed when his sons received their blessing in Genesis 48.

b. **The archers have bitterly grieved him:** Though Joseph was **shot at** and **hated**, he was still **a fruitful bough**. This is because **the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the Mighty God of Jacob**. The idea is that God's hands were on Joseph's hands, giving him strength and skill to work the bow expertly. God was there, even when Joseph did not know it.

c. **The Almighty who will bless you:** Joseph was certainly blessed in his posterity. His tribes were some of the most populous. In this sense, he received the "material blessing," the double portion aspect of the inheritance of the firstborn.

d. **The blessings of your father have excelled the blessings of my ancestors:** Jacob could say this because he was, for much of his life, a scoundrel. Now, at the end of his days, he saw just how good God was to him. He was forgiven much and loved much (Luk. 7:47).

e. **The Mighty God of Jacob:** In his words about Joseph, Jacob listed five great titles for God. These titles show that Jacob did come to an understanding of who God is.

· **The Mighty God of Jacob · The Shepherd · The Stone of Israel · The God of your father · The Almighty** i. This is much better than when Jacob referred to God as *the God of Abraham* or *the Fear of his father Isaac* (Gen. 31:53).

Now he knows who God is for *himself*.

12. (27) Benjamin: **a ravenous wolf.**

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he shall devour the prey, And at night he shall divide the spoil."

a. **Benjamin is a ravenous wolf:** This was the tribe with a reputation for fierceness. To see the great extent of this, look at Ehud (Jdg.

3:15-23), Saul (1Sa. 9:1, 14:47-52), and Paul (Act. 8:1-3). The cruelty of the tribe in general is seen in Judges 19 and 20.

13. (28) Jacob concludes his blessing of the sons.

All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

a. **And he blessed them:** Some of the things mentioned regarding these tribes may seem a bit cloudy, but only because we may not know exactly their fulfillment until the age to come.

B. Jacob's death.

1. (29-32) Jacob makes his sons promise to bury him in Canaan.

Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and

Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. The field and the cave that is there were purchased from the sons of Heth."

a. **Bury me with my fathers:** Though Jacob is now in Egypt, he knew he was not an Egyptian.

He was a son of the promise, an heir of God's covenant with Abraham, and he will be buried in the land promised to Abraham by covenant.

b. **In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah:** Egypt was filled with magnificent tombs, and because of the respect Jacob had he could have been buried like a Pharaoh. But he wanted to be buried in an obscure cave in Canaan, because Canaan was the land of promise.

2. (33) The death of Jacob.

And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

a. **Breathed his last:** This ends the life of the last of the great patriarchs, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But God can and will raise up other great men to use after them.

b. **And was gathered to his people:** There are said to be three basic attitudes towards death. Among the ancient Greeks, they held to what can be called the *death-accepting* view.

Our modern world is sold out to a *death-denying* approach. The Biblical approach is the *death-defying* attitude.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** "Assemble and listen, you sons of Jacob; listen to Israel, your father.

3 Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might and the beginning of my strength, outstanding in dignity, outstanding in power.

4 You are destructive like water and will not excel, for you got on your father's bed, then you defiled it – he got on my couch! **5**

Simeon and Levi are brothers, weapons of violence are their knives!

6 O my soul, do not come into their council, do not be united to their assembly, my heart, for in their anger they have killed men, and for pleasure they have hamstringed oxen.

7 Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their fury, for it was cruel.

I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel!

8 Judah, your brothers will praise you.

Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, your father's sons will bow down before you.

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah, from the prey, my son, you have gone up.

He crouches and lies down like a lion; like a lioness – who will rouse him?

10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs; the nations will obey him.

11 Binding his foal to the vine, and his colt to the choicest vine, he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes will be dark from wine, and his teeth white from milk.

13 Zebulun will live by the haven of the sea and become a haven for ships; his border will extend to Sidon.

14 Issachar is a strong-boned donkey lying down between two saddlebags.

15 When he sees a good resting place, and the pleasant land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and become a slave laborer.

16 Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 May Dan be a snake beside the road, a viper by the path, that bites the heels of the horse so that its rider falls backward.

18 I wait for your deliverance, O LORD.

19 Gad will be raided by marauding bands, but he will attack them at their heels.

20 Asher's food will be rich, and he will provide delicacies to royalty.

21 Naphtali is a free running doe, he speaks delightful words.

22 Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough near a spring whose branches climb over the wall.

23 The archers will attack him, they will shoot at him and oppose him.

24 But his bow will remain steady, and his hands will be skillful; because of the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel, **25** because of the God of your father, who will help you, because of the sovereign God, who will bless you

with blessings from the sky above, blessings from the deep that lies below, and blessings of the breasts and womb.

26 The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of the eternal mountains or the desirable things of the age-old hills.

They will be on the head of Joseph and on the brow of the prince of his brothers.

27 Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning devouring the prey, and in the evening dividing the plunder."

28 These are the twelve tribes of Israel. This is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He gave each of them an appropriate blessing.

29 Then he instructed them, "I am about to go to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite. **30** It is the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought for a burial plot from Ephron the Hittite.

31 There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah; there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah; and there I buried Leah. **32** The field and the cave in it were acquired from the sons of Heth."

33 When Jacob finished giving these instructions to his sons, he pulled his feet up onto the bed, breathed his last

breath, and went to his people.

1 Then Joseph hugged his father's face.¹ He wept over him and kissed him.

Guzik - Genesis 50:1-26

Genesis 50 - The Burial of Jacob; the Death of

Joseph

A. Jacob is buried in Canaan.

1. (1-3) Jacob is embalmed and mourned.

Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

a. **The Egyptians mourned him seventy days:** Jacob was mourned for 70 days among the whole nation of Egypt. A *royal* mourning period in Egypt was 72 days. Jacob was obviously a greatly honored man.

2. (4-14) Jacob's body is brought to Canaan, and he is buried next to Leah, the wife who blessed him with his first four sons.

And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.'" And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear." So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and

very solemn lamentation.

He observed seven days of mourning for his father. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan. So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. For his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

a. **Joseph went up to bury his father:** This was a dramatic burial. The entire clan gathered together to pay tribute to this man who was the last link with the patriarchs. The life of this man's grandfather overlapped with the sons of Noah.

i. "Luther remarks that there is no burial recorded in the Scriptures quite as honorable as this or with such wealth of detail." (Leupold)

b. **They mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation:** This was, no doubt, a day of rededication of the sons of Israel to the God of Israel, the God of the great covenant made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

B. Joseph comforts his brothers' fears.

1. (15) The fears of Joseph's brothers.

When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him."

a. **Perhaps Joseph will hate us:** They feared that perhaps Joseph would turn on them after Jacob's death. Knowing human nature, this wasn't an unfounded concern.

b. **And may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him:** Here they freely acknowledged **all the evil which they did**.

What they worried about was *justice*. They feared *righteous* retribution. Joseph, with his high status and prestige in Egypt, was certainly capable of bringing this retribution.

2. (16-18) The unlikely story of Joseph's brothers.

So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants."

a. **Before your father died he commanded:** This story is probably concocted. They didn't feel they had the moral right to ask Joseph for mercy, since they sinned against him so greatly.

So they put the request for mercy in the mouth of their honored and dead father.

b. **Joseph wept when they spoke to him:** Joseph probably wept because it seemed his brothers thought so little of him and they doubted his character so greatly.

c. **Fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we are your servants"** : They backed up their plea for mercy with a genuine display of humility.

3. (19-21) Joseph comforts his brothers.

Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones."

And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

a. **Am I in the place of God?** Joseph first understood he was not **in the place of God**. It wasn't his job to bring retribution upon his brothers. If the LORD chose to do it, He would have to find another instrument than Joseph.

i. From a human perspective, Joseph had the "right" and the ability to bring retribution upon his brothers, but he knew God was God, and he was not.

b. **As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good:** Joseph did not romanticize the wrong his brothers did. He plainly declared, " **you meant evil against me.**" Although this was true, it was not the greatest truth. The greatest truth was " **God meant it for good.**"

i. Every Christian should be able to see the overarching and overruling hand of God in their life, to know that no matter what evil man brings against us, God can use it for good.

ii. Joseph did not have the text of Rom.

8:28, but he had the truth of it: *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* Alas, many of us who have the text do not have the truth.

iii. Ultimately, our lives are not in the hands of men, but in the hands of God, who overrules all things for His glory.

iv. There was an old minister who had a unique gift to minister to the distressed and discouraged. In his Bible, he carried an old bookmark woven of silk threads into a motto. The back of it, where the threads were knotted and tied, was a hopeless tangle. He would take the bookmark out and show the troubled person this side of the bookmark and ask them to make sense of it.

They never could. Then the pastor would turn it over, and on the front were white letters against a solid background saying, "God is love." When events in our life seem tangled and meaningless, it is because we can see only one side of the tapestry.

c. **To save many people alive:** This was the *immediate* good in the situation. If this large family did not come to Egypt and live it would have perished in the famine. Had the family barely survived, it would have assimilated into the Canaanite tribes surrounding it. Only by coming to Egypt could they be preserved and grow into a distinct nation.

i. As said before, if Joseph's brothers never sell him to the Midianites, then Joseph never goes to Egypt. If Joseph never goes to Egypt, he never is sold to Potiphar. If he is never sold to Potiphar, Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape. If Potiphar's wife never falsely accuses him of rape, then he is never put in prison. If he is never put in prison, he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh. If he never meets the baker and butler of Pharaoh, he never interprets their dreams. If he never interprets their dreams, he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream. If he never gets to interpret Pharaoh's dream, he never is made prime minister. If he is never made prime minister, he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region. If he never wisely administrates for the severe famine coming upon the region, then his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine. If his family back in Canaan perishes from the famine, then the Messiah can't come forth from a dead family. If the Messiah can't come forth, then Jesus never came. If Jesus never came, then you are dead in your sins and without hope in this world. We are grateful for God's great and wise plan.

d. And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them:

Because Joseph trusted the overarching hand of God, even in all the evil that came upon him through his brothers, he showed the love and compassion to them he did.

i. Often, the problem we have in loving others and in freeing ourselves from bitterness we may have towards them, is really a problem of not knowing who *God is* and trusting Him to be who He says He is.

ii. Joseph's love for his brothers was shown not only in feelings and words, but also in practical action. He actually *did* provide for his brothers and their families.

C. The death of Joseph.

1. (22-24) Joseph is still in Egypt, but his heart was in Canaan.

So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children to the third generation. The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were also brought up on Joseph's knees. And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

a. **God will surely visit you and bring you out of this land to the land which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob:** Joseph was the human agent most responsible for bringing this family to Egypt. Yet he knew that because of the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this would not be their resting place. They were headed - eventually - back to Canaan.

2. (25-26) The death and embalming of Joseph.

Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." So Joseph died, being one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

a. **He was put in a coffin in Egypt:** According to this passage and Heb. 11:22, Joseph was never buried. His coffin laid aboveground for the 400 or so years until it was taken back to Canaan. It was a silent witness for all those years that Israel *was* going back to the Promised Land, just as God said.

i. All during that time, when a child of Israel saw Joseph's coffin and asked what it was there for and why it was not buried, they could be answered, "Because the great man Joseph did not want to be buried in Egypt, but in the Promised Land God will one day lead us to."

b. **You shall carry up my bones from here:** This promise was fulfilled some 400 years later, when Israel left Egypt (Exo. 13:19) This command showed that Joseph's heart was

in the Promised Land. It also proved him to be a man of great faith, trusting in things not yet seen (Heb. 11:22).

i. Some promises of God take a long time to fulfill, and we must persevere in trusting God. George Mueller was a remarkable man of faith who ran orphanages in England. In a sermon preached when he was 75 years old, he said 30,000 times in his 54 years as a Christian he received the answer to prayer on the same day he prayed it. But not all his prayers were answered so quickly. He told of one prayer that he brought to God about 20,000 times over more than 11 years, and he still trusted God for the answer: "I hope in God, I pray on, and look for the answer.

Therefore, beloved brethren and sisters, go on waiting upon God, go on praying."

ii. Joseph died looking forward to God's unfolding plan of redemption, and that is where the Book of Genesis - the Book of Beginnings - ends. It concludes looking forward to the continuation of God's eternal, loving, wise plan.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Joseph instructed the physicians in his service¹ to embalm his father, so the physicians embalmed Israel. **3**

They took forty days, for that is the full time needed for embalming.¹ The Egyptians mourned² for him seventy days.³

4 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's royal court, "If I have found favor in your sight, please say to Pharaoh,note **5** 'My father made me swear an oath. He said, "I am about to die. Bury me in my tomb that I dug for myself there in the land of Canaan."

Now let me go and bury my father; then I will return.'" **6**

So Pharaoh said, "Go and bury your father, just as he made you swear to do."

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father; all Pharaoh's officials went with him - the senior courtiers of his household, all the senior officials of the land of Egypt, **8** all Joseph's household,

his brothers, and his father's household. But they left their little children and their flocks and herds in the land of Goshen. **9** Chariots and horsemen also went up with him, so it was a very large entourage.

10 When they came to the threshing floor of Atad on the other side of the Jordan, they mourned there with very great and bitter sorrow. There Joseph observed a seven day period of mourning for his father. **11** When the Canaanites who lived in the land saw them mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a very sad occasion for the Egyptians." That is why its name was called Abel Mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.

12 So the sons of Jacob did for him just as he had instructed them. **13** His sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, near Mamre. This is the field Abraham purchased as a burial plot from Ephron the Hittite. **14** After he buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, along with his brothers and all who had accompanied him to bury his father.

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph bears a grudge and wants to repay us in full for all the harm we did to him?"

16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave these instructions before he died: **17** 'Tell Joseph this: Please forgive the sin of your brothers and the wrong they did when they treated you so badly.' Now please forgive the sin of the servants of the God of your father." When this message was reported to him, Joseph wept. **18** Then his brothers also came and threw themselves down before him; they said, "Here we are; we are your slaves." **19** But Joseph answered them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? **20** As for you, you meant to harm me, but God intended it for a good purpose, so he could preserve the lives of many people, as you can see this day. **21** So now, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your little children." Then he consoled them and spoke kindly to them.

22 Joseph lived in Egypt, along with his father's family. Joseph lived 110 years. **23** Joseph saw the descendants of Ephraim to the third generation. He also saw the children of Makir the son of Manasseh; they were given special inheritance rights by Joseph.

24 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to you and lead you up from this land to the land he swore on oath to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." **25** Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath. He said, "God will surely come to you. Then you must carry my bones up from this place." **26** So Joseph died at the age of 110. After they embalmed him, his body was placed in a coffin in Egypt.